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COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

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LA ÉPICA MEDIEVAL EN ESPAÑA Y EN FRANCIA

RAMÓN MENÉNDEZ PIDAL

UNO de los más sabios estudiosos de la epopeya, Pio Rajna, fundó en el criterio de la analogía varias dudas referentes al desarrollo de la épica española, teniendo como lo más probable que la vida del género épico en España hubo de ser siempre análoga a la del género épico en Francia. Muchos otros aplican igual criterio, y a menudo tenemos que rechazar el juico así fundado en la analogía; pues si es muy lógico el querer entender cualquier fenómeno literario español asimilándolo al correspondiente fenómeno francés, ya que éste por lo común es más rico y mejor documentado, sin embargo no podemos atenernos rutinariamente a esta comparación, pues muchas veces conduce a resultados falsos.

Se yerra frecuentemente el camino, exagerando la uniformidad de las literaturas medievales. Si por ejemplo se quiere tomar como absoluto principio directivo la unidad latina erudita que en todas ellas se impone a los autores, claro es que tal unidad existe eficiente y poderosa, pero a la vez existe una diversidad no menos eficiente, no menos fuerte; y observar sólo la unidad, desconociendo la diversidad, es tan erróneo como lo sería el caracterizar los idiomas de la Romania atendiendo sólo a la unidad latina erudita, impuesta a todos por la fuerte presión de los doctos, y desconociera la espontánea diversidad latina vulgar propia de cada una de las naciones nuevamente surgidas. No esforzarse por captar, dentro de la unidad manifiesta, esas profundas variedades nacionales, es no hacerse cargo de que la gran lejanía de los fenómenos observados, la escasa familiaridad con ellos, es la causa de que percibamos débilmente las muchas diferencias que en la realidad existen,

cayendo en el ingenuo simplismo de quien no distingue variedades entre los individuos de una raza para él poco frecuentada, y no va más allá de pensar que todos los chinos se parecen. La *medievalidad* común a los varios pueblos del occidente europeo impide el percibir la *nacionalidad* singular de cada uno.

Entre los muchos aspectos en que la épica española y la francesa difieren nos vamos a fijar solo en tres. El primero se refiere al modo como cada una de las dos poesías comprende la historicidad que sirve de fundamento al poema. El segundo tratará de la versificación. El tercero versará sobre el carácter efímero y muy nacional de cada producción épica española y la aspiración de las producciones francesas al perfeccionamiento y al éxito literario.

I. VERISMO ÉPICO

Verismo y verosimilismo

Para comparar la épica medieval española con la francesa, conviene salirnos de la Edad Media, pues estamos frente a uno de los caracteres más evidentemente perdurables en la literatura española a través de todos los tiempos a que nuestra vista puede alcanzar.

En los siglos XVI y XVII se practicaron y se discutieron en España dos maneras de poema épico que han sido llamadas, la una *histórica* y la otra *novelesca*; pero como todo poema épico tiene algo de historia y algo de novela, creo mejor emplear otras denominaciones que correspondan algo a las teorías renacentistas en que la discusión se fundaba. La escuela *verista*, la original española, aspiraba a una íntima aproximación entre la poesía y la verdad histórica, pues cuanto más la ficción corra dentro de los márgenes de la realidad que en otro tiempo existió, tanto más vigor y eficiencia tendrá lo imaginado. Por el contrario, la escuela *verosimilista*, derivada del preceptismo italiano, excluía del poema la historia verdadera, pues esta se ocupa en "lo particular," lo sucedido en un tiempo y lugar determinados, mientras la poesía se ocupa en "lo universal," que no es la realidad misma, sino "imitación" de la realidad, llevada, mediante invenciones verosímiles a la más alta perfección que la imaginativa puede concebir.¹ La declaración que los respectivos autores hicieron de uno y otro concepto, es muy ilustrativa para comprender el carácter más peculiar de las gestas españolas frente a las francesas.

Cuando los poemas medievales habían sido olvidados, hasta en su

¹ Amplíe aquí mucho las ideas que, a propósito de una brillante interpretación del *Mío Cid* dada por L. Spitzer, esbocé sobre ambas escuelas en la *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, III (1949), en cuya pag. 125 noto que el olvido de esa vieja discusión hace que la crítica moderna no acierte a comprender la diferencia entre la épica medieval del Norte y la del Sur de los Pirineos, y aplique a la española juicios fabricados en serie según el tipo utilizado para la épica francesa.

existencia misma, y comenzaron los españoles a componer nuevos poemas de tipo italiano, siguieron dócilmente a sus modelos en la forma métrica de las octavas y en la división en cantos, pero no acertaron a concebir la materia épica según lo usual en Italia, sino que tomaron una dirección peculiar más histórica que libremente ficticia. Sin que la épica medieval pudiera influir nada sobre ellos, pues les era desconocida en absoluto, tomaban espontáneamente una dirección que coincidía con la medieval y les apartaba de los prestigiosos dechados italianos. El móvil que incitó a los españoles para empezar el cultivo de nuevos poemas con versificación importada de Italia, fué la curiosidad por los sucesos actuales; y esta curiosidad, que veremos era muy extraña a los modelos italianos es la única que nos puede explicar el nacimiento de los cantares de gesta de tipo más arcaico.

El primer poema del renacimiento español que cabe citar es el de Jerónimo Sempere, *La Carolea* (1560), en el cual, tratando los recientes hechos de Carlos V, protesta "que atiende más a la verdad histórica que al poético estilo." Lo mismo hace don Luis Zapata metrificando también la historia de Carlos V en los cincuenta cantos de su *Carlo famoso* (1566). Después de éste y de otros intentos malogrados, aparece el célebre poema de Ercilla, *La Araucana* (1569), de asunto tan actual que el propio poeta fué actor en los sucesos cantados; y el principal mérito que Ercilla alega para su obra, en el prólogo, es "ser historia verdadera y de cosas de guerra," encomio repetido en las octavas dedicatorias a Felipe II ("es relación . . . sacada de la verdad"). La coetaneidad respecto a los sucesos tratados, condición de toda épica veraz, está encarecida por Ercilla con la más viva jactancia anecdótica: "este libro, porque fuese más cierto y verdadero, se hizo en la misma guerra y en los mismos pasos y sitios, escribiendo muchas veces en cuero por falta de papel, y en pedazos de cartas, algunos tan pequeños que apenas cabían seis versos, que no me costó después poco trabajo juntarlos." La forma poemática del Ariosto y del Tasso aparece ahora por primera vez en España llevada a alturas poéticas, siguiendo el desusado camino que habían empezado a abrir otros insignificantes autores españoles, y la musa del extremo verismo lograba conferir grandeza épica a las realidades de la reciente guerra en un nuevo mundo, contra unos hombres en estado bárbaro, nuevamente descubiertos.

Aunque posterior a *La Araucana* en su publicación, el más grande poema hispano, *Os Lusíadas* (1572), fué comenzado por Camoens algunos años antes que Ercilla fuese a Chile, y también tomó asunto, si no coetáneo, reciente de pocos lustros antes, y también teniendo como principal aspiración la verdad, sin ningunas hazañas fingidas, pues como el poeta en su canto quinto dice con legítimo orgullo, las navegaciones de Vasco de Gama exceden a las cantadas por Homero y por

Virgilio; la realidad es superior poéticamente a la ficción, por lo cual desecha Circes, Polifemos, Harpías y demás fábulas:

a verdade que eu conto, nua e pura
vence toda grandiloqua escritura.
(V, 89)

Todo el poema afirma el verismo épico hispano: la realidad de los hechos notables puede encerrar en sí más poesía que cualquier ficción.

Camoens y Ercilla razonan su convicción verista lo mismo que pudieran haberla razonado el autor del *Mío Cid* o el del *Romanz del Infant García*. Y llevados por el mismo arraigado convencimiento, se escribieron muchos otros poemas en las dos últimas décadas del XVI sobre diversos sucesos actuales de la famosa guerra araucana, sobre Hernán Cortés, sobre otras empresas americanas, sobre guerras de Flandes, sobre don Juan de Austria, etc. Algunos ponían en octava rima hazañas muy antiguas, pero tomándolas de las crónicas autorizadas, esto es, siguiendo lo que se tenía por verdad histórica, y siempre protestando verismo: Virués en su *Monserate* (1588), declara que "no ha llegado la poesía a más de decir la verdad de la historia, con sólo el ornamento que el verso pide."² La libre invención poética podía surgir al lado de la verdad histórica, pero sin vulnerarla.

Necesitamos entrar en el siglo XVII para que en la épica histórica³ salgan a luz los frutos de las ideas estéticas italianas, adoptadas por una escuela verosimilista española, contraria a la escuela verista o nacional que había producido ya las obras maestras notables de Ercilla y de Camoens. El Pinciano había ya adoptado, en su *Filosofía antigua poética* (1596), las doctrinas del Tasso sobre la alegoría como ánima del poema, y publicaba ahora *El Pelayo* (1605) donde fantasea y alegoriza libérrimamente una extrañísima biografía del primer rey asturiano, siguiendo el principio de que el poema heroico perfecto "es compuesto de materia, que es la verdad histórica, y de forma, que es la verosimilitud inventada."⁴ También Lope de Vega que antes había escrito sobre asunto coetáneo *La Dragontea* (1598), publicaba ahora su *Jerusalén conquistada* (1609) fantaseando para Alfonso VIII toda una cruzada a Tierra Santa, porque, según explica en la introducción: aunque eso no sea verdad, basta haber dicho Aristóteles que el poeta no debe narrar los hechos mismos, sino otros hechos verosímiles; y los que miran la poesía como historia, recuerden lo muy culpado que ha sido por ello el famoso Lucano.⁵ Idéntica doctrina expone Valbuena en

² *Bibl. de Autores Españoles*, XVII, 503.

³ Los poemas ariostescos no entran en este cuadro: *La Angélica* de Barahona de Soto (1586), *Angélica y Medoro* de Aldana (1591).

⁴ En el "Prólogo de un amigo del autor," ed. de Madrid, 1605.

⁵ *Obras sueltas* de Lope, XIV (1777), xx y xxiii.

su *Bernardo* (1624), poema también alegorizante a lo Tasso: "el poema heroico, según Aristóteles ha de ser imitación de acción humana en alguna persona grave; donde en la palabra imitación se excluye la historia verdadera, que no es sujeto de poesía que ha de ser toda imitación y parto feliz de la imaginativa," por lo cual Lucano, habiendo escrito en verso, "no es contado entre los poetas"; denuncia después Valbuena el error de quienes en sus versos encarecen el no desviarse de la verdad, y concluye: "para mi obra no hace al caso que las tradiciones que en ella sigo sean ciertas o fabulosas. Que cuanto menos tuvieren de historia y más de invención verisímil, tanto más se habrá llegado a la perfección que le deseo."⁶ Y aquí es de notar que la "invención verisímil" para Valbuena consistía en una continua intervención de magos, sátiros, ninfas, hadas, monstruos, encantamientos y prodigios. Los preceptistas del XVII usaban así la palabra *verisímil* en un sentido técnico, extraño a la acepción corriente, llegando a un verosimilismo irreal o fantástico, distante de la común verosimilitud realista; aceptémoslo como un tecnicismo pues es cierto que toda ficción, por quimérica que sea, tiene siempre algo semejante o símil a alguna verdadera realidad.

Recalquemos la significación de este episodio, no notado en la historia literaria española. Se necesitó que la colosal autoridad de Aristóteles y de los filósofos aristotélicos italianos irrumpiese, solicitando, pervirtiendo el pensamiento y la sensibilidad hispana, para que Valbuena escribiese su gran poema y se atreviese a censurar *ex cathedra* la corriente de arte seguida por un *Ercilla* y un *Camoens*, que habían expuesto, sin pretensiones teorizantes como las de él, la sencilla y espontánea seguridad que sentían sobre el verismo como forma superior del poema heroico. Todo teorizante hubo por fuerza de rendirse a la autoridad suprema de los aristotélicos, y como resumía Saavedra Fajardo: *Lucano, Ercilla y Camoens eran "excluidos de los historiadores porque mienten y de los poetas porque no mienten."*⁷ Cascales, en sus *Tablas poéticas* (1616), se muestra intérprete de Aristóteles más independiente que el Pinciano; hasta parece que va a defender el verismo, y hasta explica de modo distinto que el usual el no ser *Lucano* poeta: no por haber tratado acción histórica próxima, sino por varios errores que al tratarla cometió; pero en definitiva, siendo necesarias las "mentiras verosímiles," conviene que el asunto histórico sea de quinientos a trescientos años de antigüedad.

No hubo en España rebeldía ninguna doctrinal en defensa del arte poemático propio, como la hubo, muy varia y decidida, afirmando un

⁶ BAE, XVII, 141.

⁷ En la primera redacción de la *República literaria*, ed. García de Diego (Clásicos de la Lectura, tomo 46, 1922), p. 124 nota.

arte nuevo de hacer comedias. Sin embargo, a pesar de los teorizantes indiscutibles e indiscutidos, se siguieron, componiendo en todo el siglo XVII, al lado de algunos poemas según la preceptiva aristotélica, otros muchos de asunto coetáneo o poco antiguo, sobre la exploración del Río de la Plata, sobre la expulsión de los moriscos, sobre las guerras de Flandes, sobre los corsarios del Mediterráneo, etc. Y aquí importa observar por conclusión que este verismo, siempre muy inclinado a los temas de fecha próxima, es cosa tan hispana que resultaba absolutamente incomprensible en Italia. Esto nos lo declara el Príncipe de Esquilache, al publicar los doce cantos de su *Nápoles recuperada por el rey don Alonso* (1651) en cuya advertencia "Al lector" se queja de haber tropezado entre los italianos con una irreductible censura de totalidad, "una objeción que en Italia han puesto a este poema *antes de verle*, reparando en que elegí un héroe y una acción moderna que pasó en Italia ha pocos años, y que la notoriedad de la historia es fuerza que me estreche para no poder dilatar la invención y episodios del poema, y que de este peligro me librara habiendo escogido asunto más antiguo donde pudiera inventar con más largueza, sin atarme con este inconveniente, *que ellos juzgan que lo es.*"⁸ No puede darse con más claridad la oposición de dos escuelas nacionales: ni los críticos italianos podían comprender la elección de tema moderno hecha por el poeta español, ni éste llegaba a entender la objeción que aquellos veían con tanta evidencia.

Verismo y mito en la antigüedad

La misma absoluta incomprensión entre dos mentalidades opuestas se descubre dieciseis siglos antes (no nos asustemos ante tal cifra), en el caso de Lucano, que según vemos era siempre traído y llevado por los preceptistas. Como en la Italia del 600 se condenaba en principio el poema del madrileño Esquilache, sin necesidad de examinar sus méritos, solo por tratar un suceso histórico bastante próximo, así en la Roma imperial se condenó, sin más, la *Farsalia* del cordobés Lucano, exactamente por igual razón. Quintiliano dijo que Lucano era orador más bien que poeta; y el gramático Servio sentenció que la *Farsalia* era obra histórica y no poética.⁹ Los sucesos coetáneos no son asunto de poema pues les falta la lejanía necesaria para el desarrollo del mito y de lo sobrenatural al modo de Homero y Virgilio. Lucano insurgió contra este concepto clásico de la épica; concibió como histórico y actual el

⁸ BAE, XXIX, 289.

⁹ Quintiliano, X, 1, 90: "Lucanus, ut dicam quod sentio, magis oratoribus quam poetis annumerandus" (var. "imitandus"). Servio, *Ad Virg. Aen.*, I, 386. Marcial, XIV, 194, bromea contraponiendo el juicio de Lucano no poeta y el éxito de librería obtenido por la *Farsalia*.

poema narrativo, cuando todos los modelos lo concebían como una ficción mítica, y no tuvo secuaces en esta su originalidad. En los comienzos de la Edad Media, San Isidoro repitió el juicio condenatorio: "Lucano no entra en el número de los poetas, pues compuso historia y no poema,"¹⁰ juicio mantenido constantemente en el Renacimiento y después, teniendo por incontrovertible que la épica tiene que alejarse de la historia.

Notemos cuán significativo es el que Lucano quede así en medio de la literatura antigua en posición tan apartada y solitaria. Él, nacido y criado en el seno de una ilustre familia cordobesa de origen no latino,¹¹ revela su hispanismo en esa inspiración épica rebelde. La *Farsalia*, incomprendida por los preceptistas de la antigüedad, refleja un hispanismo igual al de los poemas veristas que escribían Ercilla, Camoens y demás españoles censurados por los aristotélicos, igual al de la *Nápoles recuperada* de Esquilache, que los literatos de Italia condenaban.

Verismo medieval, eslabón entre la edad antigua y la moderna

Por último, cronológicamente situada entre Lucano y Ercilla, aparece la gesta de *Mio Cid*, y nos sorprende la exacta concordancia que con ellos muestra, en medio de un mundo totalmente diverso del de la antigüedad y del de la época moderna, un mundo muy desligado idealmente del que le precedió y del que le siguió. Como de la *Farsalia* dijo Servio que era historia y no poema, del *Mio Cid* dijo Capmany que no era poesía, sino mera "historia rimada"; como la *Farsalia* y la *Araucana* aparecen en total desacuerdo respecto a la *Eneida* y el *Orlando*, así el *Mio Cid*, con su admirable verismo, contrasta fuertemente respecto al *Roland* de tan grandioso verosimilismo fantástico.

Vemos repetirse indefectiblemente la discrepancia hispana respecto a un arte común europeo. Camoens, en los versos arriba citados, desecha expresamente, con pleno conocimiento de causa, la fabulización mítica de Homero y de Virgilio, a quienes sin embargo admira como supremos poetas; el autor del *Mio Cid* renuncia tácitamente a las irreales fantasías del *Roland*, poema universalmente admirado; Lucano abandona el mundo mítico consagrado por los máximos modelos. En las tres edades los hispanos hallan las realidades históricas más fértiles en poesía que las irreales ficciones de la imaginación. Se batalla y se batallará siempre entre los que ven en los autores de la antigüedad latina algún carácter que perdure en su nación moderna, y los que

¹⁰ *Etímol.*, VIII, 7º, 10.

¹¹ Antonio Toar, "Sobre la stirpe de Séneca," *Humanidades*, II (1949), 249 s. El nomeu *Annaeus* y el cognomen *Séneca*, no latinos, pertenecientes con probabilidad a antiguas capas de población indoeuropea venidas a España.

tranquilamente se arrellanan en la posición negativa; pero la sorprendente y perfecta coincidencia de resultados en este triple sondeo sobre las grandes obras de las tres edades, vierte luz meridiana sobre el problema.

El verismo medieval español y el francés

La oposición que en los siglos XVI y XVII se plantea entre las dos teorías épicas de la verdad histórica y de la "invención verosímil" o "mentira verosímil," versa por lo común sobre poemas de asunto histórico reciente y poemas de asunto remoto; pero verismo no es veracidad, y bien puede manifestarse en asuntos no coetáneos que hayan sufrido ya una estructuración poemática y hasta novelesca, con tal que ella no destruya la tonalidad histórica primitiva, con tal que el elemento histórico subsista como preponderante.

En la épica española son ejemplos de verismo pleno el más antiguo poema conservado, el *Mío Cid*, y otros de que tenemos suficiente noticia, como el *Romanz del Infant García*, y el cantar del *Rey Sancho de Zamora*, los tres referentes a sucesos del siglo XI; son historia ornada y estructurada poéticamente, mediante ficciones realistas de carácter historial, con un epílogo ficticio de reparación jurídica o de venganza, en los dos primeros, y de expiación moral en el tercero. Veristas son también, porque en ellos todavía predomina el elemento histórico, otros cantares más antiguos, y por tanto más refundidos, en los cuales el final inventado no es un simple remate de la acción, sino que es toda una segunda parte, una nueva trama fabulosa. Tal sucede con los *Infantes de Lara* y con la *Condesa traidora*, cuya segunda parte es una extensa ficción, pero no desarrollada con intrincación novelesca, sino con derecha sencillez épica, y envuelta en el denso ambiente histórico de la primera parte, que refleja sorprendentemente las muy singulares circunstancias arcaicas, las muy especiales modalidades políticas que tan extrañamente distinguen la segunda mitad del siglo décimo, inconfundibles con las de ninguna otra época, y que son restos de la coetaneidad originaria, pues no serían imaginables en fecha tardía, ni siquiera ya a fines del siglo XI.

En cuanto a Francia, los poemas hoy conocidos se hallan mucho más distantes de los sucesos a que se refieren, y por eso están ya muy adelantados en el constante proceso refundidor. En este sentido cabe observar que cuando se conservan diferentes versiones de un mismo tema, la más antigua presenta alguna mayor aproximación a los sucesos históricos de donde arranca, como se ve por ejemplo en la leyenda de Guillermo de Orange.

Sin duda las gestas francesas, en época anterior a la del caudal hoy

existente, tendrían en sus relatos la veracidad necesaria para ser cantadas ante un público que conocía algo de los sucesos referidos, y tendrían el consiguiente verismo imaginativo. Todavía entre las gestas llegadas a nosotros, la primera parte de la vieja *Chanson de Guillaume* ofrece excepcionales rasgos de verismo con muy gran sobriedad realista en la estructura y desarrollo de su trama, contrastando con la *Chanson de Roland*, que es poco más o menos de la misma fecha, pero que se halla mucho más avanzada en el proceso refundidor. Otras gestas francesas, aunque posteriores, como el *Raoul de Cambrai*, presentan una trama que apenas puede concebirse como fruto de libre imaginación, sino como fundada en la sucesión de acaecimientos reales. Siempre, sin embargo, es de advertir que el verismo francés es más imaginativo, diverso del verismo más historial de las gestas españolas.

Verosimilismo medieval en España y en Francia

Claro es que en la épica española medieval, lo mismo que en la de los siglos áureos, junto al verismo caracterizador y dominante se da también el verosimilismo, aunque nunca llega al grado fantástico a que Valbuena llegó.

La producción principal del antiguo verosimilismo es la gesta de *Bernardo del Carpio*, en la que varios elementos históricos inconexos están aplicados a un héroe imaginario, y todos subordinados a un desenlace, ficticio también, de fuerte efectismo trágico. Puede citarse además el cantar de las *Mocedades del Cid* en todas sus varias redacciones conservadas en verso o en prosa, donde también algunos sucesos históricos se aplican a la adolescencia del héroe. Igualmente es de recordar aquí el poema clerical de *Fernán González*, etc.

Comparando en este punto el tema capital de la épica española con el de la francesa, podemos apreciar las diferencias. La poetización fabulosa, en que predomina la ficción sobre la historia, no la hallamos para la leyenda de Mio Cid sino en el siglo XIII, en la prosificación del viejo poema incluida en la *Crónica General*, donde se suprimen o deforman muchos pasajes que en la versión primera se ajustaban al verismo histórico, y se añaden varios episodios enteramente novelescos; pero toda esa labor de novelización corre siempre dentro de los cauces de la realidad, sin nada sobrenatural o prodigioso, sin apartarse de lo que comunmente se llama "lo verosímil," desarrollando, pues, un *verosimilismo realista*. Igual realismo se observa siempre en las demás gestas españolas, aun en las más novelescas, que a todo más admiten lo sobrenatural milagroso, creído verdadero. En Francia, por el contrario, abunda el *verosimilismo fantástico*, tal como hemos visto que lo entendían Valbuena y el preceptismo del XVII, donde la similitud

con la verdad incluye las ficciones más irreales. Esto hallamos ya en los más antiguos poemas conservados, siendo característico del *Roland* más antiguo y de *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*: guerreros paganos, de figura monstruosa, combatientes cristianos de resistencia física preternatural, portentos estupendos, sueños fatídicos, espadas que hienden las peñas, descripciones de prodigiosa irrealidad. Y lo mismo en otras muchas canciones de gesta más tardías, donde a menudo intervienen toda clase de maravillas con hadas, magos, gigantes, enanos, ogros, seres siempre extraños a los cantares españoles.

Así la novelización que todo relato épico intensifica en el curso de sus refundiciones, es siempre más avanzada al Norte que al Sur de los Pirineos. Una gesta española, por muy alejada que se halle ya de su origen, habrá de quedar en su trama más semejante a una novela de Walter Scott que a una de esas canciones de gesta. Y esas dos maneras de poetizar son tan connaturales a la una y a la otra literatura, que cuando un tema de Francia o de España sea imitado en España o en Francia, habrá de sufrir una adaptación para dotarle del estilo grato al país receptor, pues toda obra popular quiere ajustarse al común gusto colectivo. Al estudiar las relaciones entre la épica francesa y la española, se observa que todo traspaso de una a otra literatura comporta un completo arreglo en la fabulación: una canción de gesta que pasa a España habrá de ser despojada de su exuberancia inventiva, y viceversa, cuando un juglar francés toma asunto de una gesta española, se siente obligado a aderezarlo a la francesa, añadiéndole elementos maravillosos y mayor enredo novelesco.

Indiquemos de pasada algunos ejemplos. En los *Infantes de Lara*, al imitarse un episodio del *Renaud de Montauban*, se suprime la intervención del encantador Maugis. La *Peregrinación del rey Luis de Francia*, al adaptar la trama de *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*, suprime todos los portentos y milagros del original francés y, desechando la atrevida desenvoltura, la desenfadada burla con que el original trata su trama, la sustituye por el sobrio comedimiento, esencial a las obras de la épica popular española. Viceversa, el *Anseïs de Cartage*, al imitar a fines del siglo XII la leyenda del Rey Rodrigo y la hija del conde Julián, no puede menos de añadirle elementos maravillosos: los doscientos años de Carlomagno, la oración de éste que hace detener la corriente del Gironde para que pase el ejército cristiano, el navío de ébano y plata en que irá la desposada hija de Marsil, y multitud de incidentes con que se enreda la acción para llenar 11.600 versos en la redacción conservada. El *Hernaut de Beaulaude* del siglo XIV, al tomar del cantar de *Fernán González* preso por el rey de Navarra la armazón total de su trama, la novelizó muy complicadamente al gusto

francés, añadiéndole además los encantamientos y fascinaciones del mago Perdigón y los brutales mazazos del gigante Robastre.

Quienes, dando por supuesta la identidad de las literaturas, no se hacen cargo de la diversa esencia peculiar de cada uno de los dos estilos tradicionales ni piensan en la imperiosa necesidad de adaptación susodicha, al ver grandes diferencias en alguna de estas obras imitadoras, no pueden creer que tal imitación exista.

II. LA FORMA ÉPICA EN ESPAÑA EN FRANCIA

Asonantes y consonantes

Cuando comienza el florecimiento literario en la epopeya francesa y en la española hallamos un mismo tipo de rima, el asonante. En el siglo XI y primera mitad del XII todos los poemas franceses se escriben en series de versos monorrimos asonantados (*Chanson de Guilelme, Roland, Pèlerinage de Charlemagne, Charroi de Nîmes, Gormond*, etc.).¹²

En la segunda mitad del XII, que es la época de mayor producción épica, se redactan poemas con rima consonante (*Aliscans, Fierabras, Saisnes*, etc.) y la novedad cunde tanto que la siguen bastante más de la mitad de las "chansons" atribuibles a este tiempo. Para ponerlos a la moda, se refunden los poemas viejos, mezclando a los asonantes antiguos series consonantadas nuevas, como puede verse en los varios manuscritos que nos conservan refundiciones del *Roland*, en los cuales se ve el reiterado trabajo de diferentes juglares para modernizar el viejo poema asonantado. Salvando lo muy impreciso que es la fechación de las "chansons de geste," podemos arriesgarnos a dar idea de lo que es la rima en este medio siglo, diciendo que 21 chansons están versificadas en consonantes, 15 en asonantes, y 7 mezclando la rima antigua y la nueva.

Después, el triunfo completo de la rima perfecta es rápido. Al siglo XIII son atribuibles unas 25 "chansons" en consonantes y 13 en asonantes, éstas últimas pertenecientes casi todas a la primera mitad de la centuria. En el siglo XIV y primeros años del XV se escriben sólo unas 24 "chansons," todas en consonantes, menos una en asonantes atribuible ésta a la primera mitad del XIV.

Frente a este temprano y arrollador trabajo, encaminado a eliminar el asonante en la epopeya francesa, hallamos que en España el asonante reina inmovible, desde el siglo XII al XV, lo mismo en el *Mío Cid* que en *Roncesvalles*, o en los *Infantes de Salas* y en el *Rodrigo*. La epopeya española aparece así perpetuamente fiel a la tradición originaria; nótese bien esto, fiel hasta el final, en conservar la primitiva rima de la poesía francesa, provenzal e italiana.

¹² Rehago aquí mi estudio, "La forma épica en España y en Francia," *Rev. Filol. Esp.*, XX (1933), 345-352.

Pero no es esto sólo. La asonancia épica francesa de los siglos XI, XII y XIII responde bien a la lengua de entonces, sin conservar ningún arcaísmo de épocas pasadas, como se conserva en la asonancia española. Me refiero a la *-e* llamada paragógica, esto es a las rimas *cibdade, mare, tale*, etc., asonando con *padre, mande*, etc.; *señore, corazone*, asonando con *torre, señores*, etc., *servire* con *Esidre*, etc., palabras provistas de una *-e* final que la lengua corriente rechazaba.

Esta *-e* no es licencia poética de paragoge, que se aplicara rara vez para salvar alguna dificultad de la rima, sino que se empleaba de modo regular en todas, absolutamente en todas las palabras al final de cada verso. No es *-e* paragógica; es etimológica, y data de una época en que la *-e* final latina se conservaba aún; *male, heredade, flore, salutatione, venire* se usaron corrientemente hasta mediados del siglo XI como formas que los bien hablados preferían a las desprovistas de la *-e* latina. Pero tales formas con *-e* final se anticuan en breve, durante la segunda mitad del siglo XI, pues sobreviene un radical y rápido cambio en el gusto lingüístico respecto a la cadencia de las palabras acabadas en *-e*. En la última parte de ese siglo y en todo el XII, en gran parte por influjo francés, domina una fuerte tendencia contraria, suprimiendo la *-e* no sólo en *mal, flor, servir*, como la tendencia propia del idioma pedía, sino tras consonantes que hoy no se toleran como finales, *infant, part, romanz, nuef* (nueve), *noch, linax* (linaje), etc.; de modo que la conservación de la *-e* como gala poética tuvo que afirmarse y consolidarse en tiempos anteriores a las postrimerías del XI y no después cuando la *-e* final estaba en completo descrédito.

Las rimas constantes en nuestras gestas, *Trinidad, alaudare*, según el manuscrito del *Mio Cid*; *mortaldade, edade, male, consejarade* (aconsejará), *dirade* (dirá), en el manuscrito del *Roncesvalles*; *heredade, leale, señore, emperadore*, etc., en los *Infantes de Salas*, eran muy usadas en la lengua común en la primera parte del siglo XI y sólo fué posible que se siguieran usando en los cantares de gesta de los siglos XII y sucesivos gracias al poderoso ascendiente que pudieron ejercer los relatos épicos de los siglos X y XI sobre los refundidores y poetas épicos posteriores.

Estamos pues en presencia de un arcaísmo extraordinario, mucho más extraordinario que la conservación de la asonancia. Un uso poético, que responde a condiciones lingüísticas del siglo X y parte del XI, es conservado por la épica española hasta en los últimos poemas medievales y hasta en los romances de los siglos XV y XVI. La epopeya española al mantener la asonancia, mantiene un tipo de asonancia muy extrañamente primitivo, mientras la épica francesa no sólo no conserva ningún sistema de asonante arcaico, sino que ni asonantes conserva ya desde el siglo XIV.

Verso isosílabo y anisosílabo

Cuando en Francia ocurre el gran florecimiento literario de la epopeya entre los siglos XI y XII, el metro de las "chansons de geste" es de un número fijo de sílabas, pero en perfeccionar la estructura del verso trabajaban empeñosamente los juglares, pues se conservan hasta cuatro tipos diferentes; tres tipos de verso largo con cesura, uno de 5+7 sílabas¹³ y otro de 7+7, que son los más usuales, otro de 7+5 que se ve sólo en *Girard de Rousillon* y en *Aiol*, y otro de 9 sílabas en *Gormond et Isembard* y en el *Alexandre* de Albéric de Besançon. El verso de 5+7 era el que gozaba de más antiguo cultivo, pues en la primera mitad del XI ya se usaba en la poesía religiosa (*Saint Alexis*) y antes en la didáctica provenzal (*Boeci*); es el verso usado en el *Roland* y en los pocos poemas que se atribuyen a fines del XI y primera mitad del XII, de los cuales uno solo está en verso alejandrino 7+7, *Le Pèlerinage de Charlemagne*. A la época de mayor actividad, la segunda mitad del siglo XII, pueden atribuirse unas 22 "chansons" en verso de 5+7, 17 en verso de 7+7, y dos con mezcla de ambas versificaciones. En el siglo XIII pueden contarse 16 "chansons" en verso de 5+7, todas pertenecientes a la primera mitad del siglo, y 23 "chansons" en verso de 7+7. Al siglo XIV se asignan 25 "chansons," todas en verso de 7+7.

Esta versificación no influye nada en la épica española, aunque en ella influyó tanto la épica francesa. Esa total falta de influjo se comprueba en el verso de 7+7 sílabas. El verso alejandrino penetró en España hacia el segundo cuarto del siglo XIII, y el autor del poema de *Alexandre* se vanagloria de practicar la gran novedad y gran maestría de un verso "a sílabas cuntadas."

Mester trago fermoso, non es de joglaría,
mester es sen peccado, ca es de clerezía...

El *Apolonio* se alaba también de ser "un romance de nueva maestría," refiriéndose sin duda a su verso alejandrino; pero este alejandrino de clerecía no es en series de vario número de versos, sino en cuartetos consonantados: los juglares españoles permanecieron, pues, ajenos al alejandrino épico francés que iba en series monorrimas, ora asonantadas ora consonantadas; tan ajenos que hasta el cantar de *Fernán González* va escrito en cuartetos, obedeciendo al influjo del poema español de *Alexandre* y no al de las "chansons de geste."¹⁴

Todos los demás cantares españoles, en su popularismo inmovible,

¹³ Según la cuenta francesa, 4+6 sílabas. A toda cifra que damos según la cuenta española, rebájese una unidad.

¹⁴ El influjo del *Alexandre* en el *Fernán González* no es sólo en la métrica, pues es muy abundante en la composición del poema, según hice ver en *Archiv für die neueren Sprachen*, CXIV (1905), 246-247.

quedaron totalmente apartados de las perfecciones que el arte de clerecía francés venía realizando en la forma épica; todos ellos siguieron escribiéndose dentro del viejo y tradicional mester de juglaría español, en un verso de sílabas no contadas, dividido en dos hemistiquios, los cuales ora tienen 7+7 sílabas, ora 6+7, 7+8, 6+8, 8+8, etc., sin ninguna regularidad apreciable, pudiendo oscilar los versos entre 10 y 20 sílabas.

Tan enorme diferencia métrica entre las dos epopeyas es piedra de escándalo para la crítica que no quiere hacerse cargo de la tajante diferencia establecida entre el arte de clerecía "a sílabas contadas" y el arte de juglaría. Muchos eruditos se negaron a reconocer la existencia de un metro sin cuento de sílabas, y atribuyeron las constantes desigualdades silábicas del *Mío Cid* a los consabidos "yerros del copista," tan socorridos para los filólogos víctimas de prejuicio en esta cuestión.

El gran argumento se basaba en el criterio de analogía: un verso amétrico de esa clase no fué usado en ningún otro país, decía H. R. Lang;¹⁵ objetaba por otra parte J. Cornu: ¿como el poeta de *Mío Cid* que conoce las más altas leyes de la composición poética y que sabe hallar 4.000 asonantes, no va a saber contar las sílabas?¹⁶ Pero después se descubren otras poesías españolas de verso irregular, se estudian otras ya conocidas, aparece el manuscrito de *Roncesvalles* también irregular,¹⁷ y resulta de todo ello que los cuatro manuscritos conocidos de cantares épicos, tres procedentes de Castilla y uno de Navarra, están concordes en ofrecernos un verso anisosílabo, y cualquier duda es ya insostenible dentro de toda crítica sensata.

Pero además del argumento "esto no fué así en ningún otro país," tan desconcertante para algunos, en este caso no es rechazable simplemente por ineficaz, sino también por inexacto. En las primeras muestras de la poesía italiana abundan los casos de irregularidad silábica.¹⁸ No cuentan las sílabas los juglares anglonormandos, ni los venecianos, ni los demás norte-italianos cuando adaptan a su público los versos franceses.¹⁹ Mientras el *Anseïs de Cartage* y el *Aspremont* francés son regulares en el cuento de las sílabas, las versiones franco-italianas de estos poemas se contentan con un silabismo irregular; mientras el *Beuve de Hantone*

¹⁵ En la *Romanic Review*, V (1914), 17-18, etc. Véase en contra la *Rev. Filol. Esp.*, III (1916), 338 ss.

¹⁶ Véase *Cantar de Mío Cid*, ed. 1945-46, pp. 82 y 1174.

¹⁷ *Rev. Filol. Esp.*, I (1914), 93-96 (para *Elena y María*), y IV (1917), 123-136 (sobre *Roncesvalles*). Además P. Henriquez Ureña, *La versificación irregular en la poesía castellana* (1920, 2ª ed. 1933).

¹⁸ Véanse las muestras publicadas en la *Crestomazia* de E. Monaci. En *Poesía juglaresca* (1924), p. 348, cito la traducción lombarda de la Vida de Santa María Egipcíaca.

¹⁹ Véase el estudio que, fundado principalmente en el Buovo d'Antona, hace E. C. Hills, "Irregular Epic Metres," en el *Homenaje ofrecido a Menéndez Pidal*, I (1925), 759-777.

francés mide bien 5-7 sílabas, las dos redacciones norte-italianas y las dos anglonormandas se dan por satisfechas siendo irregulares; el *Macaire* francés estaba en verso isosílabo, en tanto que el italiano es irregular. Nada nos puede extrañar que el *Roncesvalles* español tenga metro vacilante 7-7, 6-7, 7-8, etc., imitando al *Roland* francés de 5-7 sílabas exactas.

No hemos pues de preguntarnos sorprendidos, como J. Cornu y F. Hansen, por qué el autor de *Mio Cid* no había de contar las sílabas. Lo que hay que preguntar es justamente lo contrario: ¿por qué cuentan las sílabas los juglares franceses? Ellos primitivamente constituyen la excepción; ellos, más pronto que en Italia o en España, desarrollaron un sentido lingüístico musical bien preciso, generalizando un silabeo exacto frente al anisosilabismo que debemos suponer como estado inicial de toda la métrica románica.

Partiendo de aquí, mirando el isosilabismo francés como resultado de un progreso realizado en siglos remotos, teniendo en cuenta el anisosilabismo tan arraigado en toda la poesía juglaresca española, en la lírica lo mismo que en la épica perdurable aún en los siglos XIII y XIV en Italia y en la Inglaterra normanda, podemos pensar que la epopeya francesa debió tener también un período de verso anisosílabo. Y es muy posible que alguna de las muchas "chansons de geste" perdidas, que aún la crítica más antitradicionalista se ve obligada a suponer existieron en el siglo XI, usase todavía el verso irregular como las de España. El que no quiera suponer tanto, deberá suponer al menos que la irregularidad existía en siglos anteriores. La cantilena de *San Farón* pudiera darnos una muestra de métrica irregular en el siglo IX.²⁰

Por último, debe reconocerse que la regularidad del verso más antiguo, el de 5-7, no está aún bien asentada en la segunda mitad del XI. La inestimable *Chanson de Guilleme* tiene una cuarta parte de sus versos o muy largos o muy cortos, y esto no puede ser todo achacable a que el texto esté copiado en Inglaterra, sino debemos creer que muchos yerros estaban en el original.²¹ No se conocerá bien el desarrollo histórico de la métrica francesa hasta que no se estudien los manuscritos pensando menos en el copista y más en el autor.

III. EL ESCÁNDALO DE LOS TEXTOS PERDIDOS Y EL MILAGRO DE LOS TEMAS PERDURABLES

Negación de textos perdidos

La diferencia más visible entre las dos epopeyas que comparamos,

²⁰ Pudiera sin embargo tender a una base de 7+5, pero muy irregular. La hábil reconstrucción hecha por R. Louis, *Girart, comte de Vienne*, I (Auxerre, 1947), p. 300, creo regulariza el verso en forma no probable en el siglo IX.

²¹ Así piensa P. Meyer, *Romania*, XXXII (1903), 598.

está en el número de los textos que de ellas se conservan. De España se conocen hoy cinco poemas en sólo cinco manuscritos muy deficientes los cinco. De Francia se conservan más de 90 poemas escritos entre los siglos XI y XIV, muchos de ellos con tres, cuatro, ocho, hasta trece manuscritos, sumando en total unos 400 códices o restos de códices.²² Esta desconcertante diferencia en el número de los textos conocidos podríamos interpretarla presuponiendo una necesaria semejanza en el desarrollo del género épico a un lado y a otro del Pirineo, y dando por lo tanto argumento para dudar que en España hubiese habido una actividad bastante continuada en la producción de cantares de gesta, ya que tan pocos se conservan, argumento que será grato a la teoría épica individualista, siempre dispuesta a asombrarse y a tomar a escándalo la suposición de varios otros poemas perdidos, por muy autorizada que ella esté y por muy necesaria que sea para comprender la historia de los varios temas legendarios. Pero en vez de razonar tomando por base la semejanza en el desarrollo del género épico en España y en Francia, debemos pensar en una radical diferencia, que nos obliga a rechazar la duda apuntada y a no participar de la escéptica sorpresa que muestran algunos críticos, como H. R. Lang, escandalizándose ante el supuesto de gestas perdidas que se apoya en el resumen de ellas contenido en las crónicas, y negando todo valor probatorio a tales resúmenes.

La enorme diferencia entre el caudal épico hoy conocido en Francia respecto al conservado en España, se explica en primer lugar por la general inferioridad de España, tanto en la producción poética como en la producción de manuscritos, y por el habitual descuido conservador en los archivos, especialmente en los castellanos. Cualquier otro género literario nos ofrece ejemplo de esto último; así los lais y fábulas de María de Francia se conservan hoy en dos docenas de códices y el *Roman de Renard* en una docena, mientras los cuentos de don Juan Manuel, un prócer muy preocupado de propagar sus escritos, sólo llegaron a nosotros en cinco copias, y los del Arcipreste de Hita en tres, muy faltas de folios. En segundo lugar, y esto nos interesa más, el corto número de manuscritos épicos conservados responde al carácter mucho más popular de la epopeya española.

Toda gran popularidad de un género literario entraña gran pérdida de sus producciones. Recuérdese, por ejemplo, que el teatro moderno europeo cuando alcanza su mayor éxito público a comienzos del XVII, lo mismo en España que en Francia o en Inglaterra, deja perderse a centenares, a millares las obras de sus poetas predilectos: de Lope de Vega, de Hardy, de Heywood han desaparecido muchísimas más obras que las conservadas. La popularidad implica muy poco esmero en la

²² Hago la cuenta sobre L. Gautier, *Les Epopées françaises*, I (1878), 234-243; exclúyense los poemas en pareados.

transmisión escrita de los textos: las copias se estiman nada más que como recurso efímero del momento, algo provisional, como el favor del público que pide siempre obras nuevas o renovadas; también por eso las copias son de inferior calidad material, poco acreedoras a los cuidados de la bibliofilia. En nuestro propio campo recordemos la pobreza del único y mutilado manuscrito en que se nos conservó el *Mío Cid*; la pobre ejecución de la copia del *Fernán González*, negligentemente despojada de tantas hojas; la fragmentaria copia de la gesta de los *Infantes de Salas* y del *Rodrigo*, incluidas ambas, como de prestado, en la páginas de sendas crónicas; el bárbaro trato dado a los dos únicos folios salvados del *Roncesvalles*.

Por otra parte es gran error el creer que la suposición de muchos textos perdidos es algo exclusivo de la teoría épica tradicionalista. La crítica más empeñada en la modernidad de las "chansons de geste," la crítica más condenatoria de toda hipótesis referente a una edad primera de la que no se conserva monumento épico ninguno, la crítica de un J. Bédier, tiene que suponer para Francia una época anterior a la de los textos hoy conocidos, de la cual se han perdido multitud de "chansons" que las hoy conservadas prueban haber existido antes. Sólo que Bédier admite esa época a condición de que no se dé un paso más atrás del siglo XI. Pero no hay razón alguna para esa fecha irrefragable. ¿Por qué no admitir textos perdidos en el siglo X, como le objecta M. Wilmotte, o en siglos anteriores aún, como objectan R. Fawtier, Th. Frings, L. F. Benedetto, y tantos otros, llevados de la necesidad de explicar el desarrollo histórica de la epopeya? Indudablemente la epopeya francesa sufrió en sus primeros tiempos, en su edad heroica, una pérdida total de sus textos, exactamente lo mismo que la epopeya española, y sólo se diferencia de ésta más tarde, en la época del florecimiento literario, conservando entonces en abundancia sus refundiciones y sus creaciones nuevas. Esto depende del distinto carácter y distinta evolución del género épico a un lado y a otro del Pirineo.

La tradicionalidad española más popular que la francesa

Hemos obtenido una distinción firme: la épica española se mantuvo siempre en un ambiente y en un tono popular, sin aspirar a ningún perfeccionamiento técnico o de escuela, según se ve con extraordinaria claridad en la métrica: se dirige siempre al "pueblo," al público en general, a la nación entera, sin mirar particularmente a las clases doctas. No así la épica francesa, que desde muy temprano va aspirando, cada vez más, a la perfección literaria, orientándose cada vez más hacia el público letrado. Y esta diferente destinación influye de modo decisivo en la suerte de una y otra poesía.

La vida tradicional de un tema poético, esto es, la reiteración del

mismo, sea en forma escrita sea oral, a través de varias generaciones y de varios siglos, implica sucesivas renovaciones o refundiciones, cada una de las cuales repite algo de la anterior y renueva algo. Cuando la tradicionalidad es de sesgo muy popular, despreocupada de primores literarios, el texto en que cada refundidor anónimo expone el tema poético importa menos que el tema mismo; las refundiciones se suceden fáciles, pues la versificación es en extremo sencilla y bastan pocos cambios o retoques en la narración para renovar el tema dentro de un gusto de llana espontaneidad. Ocurre así rápido olvido de cada una de las formas, que es pronto suplantada por las sucesivas; se pierden los textos particulares, pero el tema perdura en el interés público.

Por el contrario, en la tradicionalidad inclinada hacia el arte docto, las refundiciones toman un carácter más personal. Sus autores no quieren quedar siempre anónimos, tanto que más de un 20% de las "chansons de geste" conservadas tienen autor conocido.²³ Los refundidores se esfuerzan por alcanzar perfección técnica en la métrica, gran novedad inventiva en el plan y mucho mayor extensión en el desarrollo de la trama, llegando muchos a los 20.000 versos y más. Aspirando a la admiración literaria, logran que su obra sea estimada y conservada por los entendidos en el arte, pero las refundiciones son pocas, no pudiendo repetirse fácilmente el considerable esfuerzo que cada una exige, sobre todo por su versificación ambiciosa y por su gran extensión; en consecuencia la tradicionalidad se agota falta de renovación frecuente, la leyenda deja de vivir en el recuerdo del público.

Perduración de los temas

De aquí una diferencia esencial. La tradición española, lo mismo en su edad primitiva que en la de su florecimiento literario, pierde todos o casi todos sus textos; de su edad más literaria sólo se han salvado los cinco manuscritos dichos, incompletos o fragmentarios. Pero los temas de esos textos perdidos perduraron con fecunda vida, hasta empalmar con otra tradicionalidad de un nuevo género poético, el de las baladas o romances épico-líricos, que junto a muchos temas breves novelescos de varia procedencia, heredan muchos episodios de la caduca epopeya, hasta el punto que los romances de los *Infantes de Lara*, de *Fernán González* o del *Cid* continúan repitiendo en parte los mismos versos de los cantares de gesta. Muy al contrario, la épica francesa, si en su primera edad de mayor fuerza tradicional y de versificación poco artificiosa pierde, lo mismo que la española, la totalidad de sus textos, después, conforme se va haciendo más esmerada y docta, conserva multitud de sus poemas en 400 códices, algunos de excelente factura, muy apreciados en los arma-

²³ Hago esta cuenta sobre los datos de L. Gautier, *Les Épopées françaises*, I (1878), 219-223. Véase también E. Faral, *Les Jongleurs*, pp. 177-178.

rios de bibliotecas y casas particulares; pero los temas en ellos poetizados no llegaron con vida tradicional hasta poder influir en las baladas épico-líricas, florecidas a partir del siglo XIV.

Esta radical diferencia entre la tradición española y la francesa resalta mejor si nos fijamos en los temas franceses que la épica española tomó como suyos. La *Chanson de Roland* es legible hoy en muchos manuscritos que nos conservan varias refundiciones, o sea varios estados del poema cantados en varias épocas de los siglos XI y XII, pero no sobrevivió nada de la inspiración poemática que pudiese animar las baladas francesas del siglo XIV o siguientes, las cuales nada supieron de Roland, ni de Olivier, ni de Turpín. Opuestamente, el cantar de *Roncesvalles* se perdió en todas las varias refundiciones que hubo de tener, salvándose sólo dos miseros folios utilizados como bolsa; pero en cambio esas refundiciones que no dejaron de sí ningún texto manuscrito, dejaron su espíritu y parte de sus versos más famosos en los romances que en los siglos XV y XVI se cantaban por toda España, lo mismo en la boca de labradores y menestrales que en la de caballeros y damas, romances que conmemoran el altivo heroísmo de Roldán cuando se niega a pedir socorro al emperador, o las arengas del arzobispo Turpín, o las maldiciones que el rey Marsin, en su huida, lanza contra Mahoma, o el sueño présago de doña Alda, o tantas aventuras más de otros personajes muy populares en España, aunque olvidados en su patria francesa; toda la vieja poesía del gran poema francés y de su imitación española seguía viviendo tradicionalmente al Sur de los Pirineos, y no al Norte.

Otro ejemplo entre muchos más. La *Chanson des Saisnes*, en la versión que de ella hizo no un anónimo, sino un poeta amigo de la fama y muy fecundo, despreciador de juglares innominados, Jean Bodel, versión rimada en 7.650 alejandrinos preciosamente aconsonantados, fué muy estimada, muy célebre, y se conserva en cuatro manuscritos; sin embargo, tampoco llegó con popularidad hasta dejar algún rastro de sí en la canción popular francesa. Pero cuando la obra de Jean Bodel fué adaptada por un juglar español, en el cantar de *Sansueña*, tuvo suerte enteramente opuesta: aunque ninguna de las refundiciones, que sin duda tuvo, salvó un folio siquiera de su texto, varios de sus episodios se perpetuaron en el romancero, y en el siglo XVI eran por todos muy cantados los pecaminosos y sobresaltados amores de Baldovinos con la reina mora Sevilla, y aun hasta hoy se puede oír cantar, en remotas aldeas, la batalla de Belardos, alumbrada por la luz de la luna llena; éxito extraordinario de algunas invenciones de Jean Bodel, cuyo poema ningún aprecio tuvo entre los literatos de España, ni mereció de ellos la mención más fugaz exigida por H. R. Lang para creer en la existencia de un poema desaparecido.²⁴

²⁴ En los *Mélanges Mario Roques*, I (Baden-Paris, 1950), 229-244, pruebo la existencia y éxito del cantar de *Sansueña*.

En resumen, la épica francesa desde fines del siglo XII abre una época en que sus refundiciones son en consonantes, dilatadas en 10.000, 20.000, 25.000 versos, hechas para ser leídas más que para cantadas; en estas refundiciones de gran esfuerzo, escasas en número por lo difíciles, la tradicionalidad languidece y se apaga. Así las "chansons de geste" no inspiraron baladas ni ningún otro género tradicional.

Muy desemejante es el desarrollo de la tradicionalidad española, que lo mismo en su edad heroica que en su edad floreciente vive una vida en todo popular o nacional, sin la menor aspiración a ganar crédito en las escuelas literarias, conservadora tenaz de temas viejos, lo mismo que de formas métricas extrañamente arcaicas, desechadas por todos los otros géneros de la poesía peninsular. Esta poesía se propagaba, más que en códices permanentes, en copias efímeras y en la recitación oral; por eso sufre inmensa pérdida de textos, lo mismo en su edad áurea que en su edad primitiva; pero arraigó firmemente en el recuerdo de las gentes y su espíritu transmigró a otros géneros de valor nacional.

Primero la epopeya, en su edad de florecimiento, se albergó en las Crónicas Generales, género que, en los siglos XIII, XIV y XV tuvo, aunque en prosa, una verdadera vida tradicional. Los abultados códices historiográficos (que hoy se conservan por centenares) son todos diferentes unos de otros en su contenido; rarísimo es el caso en que uno aparezca como copia más o menos fiel de otro; cada formador de un nuevo códice innovaba algo en su modelo, como cada cantor de un romance tradicional pone algo de suyo. Así las crónicas se refundían activísimamente por autores, siempre anónimos, que en su trabajo prestaban particular atención a las mudanzas sufridas por los poemas épicos.

Después, sobre todo en los siglos XV y XVI, el alma de la epopeya se transfundió en el romancero, según acabamos de indicar. Los temas de la épica histórica prolongan su vida en el nuevo canto épico-lírico, y varios de esos temas, tan copiosos en el romancero quinientista, sobreviven hoy en el canto popular de España, de América y de los Sefaradies.

Gracias sobre todo a la vigorosa acción del romancero, el ideario renacentista que tan violenta y radicalmente apartó a otros pueblos de su pasado medieval, no trajo en España ningún olvido para los antiguos héroes. En la segunda mitad del XVI y en todo el XVII, los temas épicos pasaron del romancero al teatro, siendo escenificados lo mismo por dramaturgos anónimos que por los mayores poetas nacionales. Luego se renovaron en el teatro neoclásico, se repitieron en el teatro romántico y, aunque menos, también en el moderno.

Y fuera de estas tres grandes ramas de la literatura los antiguos héroes nunca cesaron de animar la poesía lírica, la poemática, la novelística de todos los tiempos. Siempre los mejores poetas acudieron a rege-

nerar con su inspiración las creaciones épicas tradicionales. Con razón observa Pio Rajna que en ninguna otra literatura, fuera de la española, puede formarse una antología como *La Gesta del Cid* de A. Restori que, ciñéndose a una sola tradición poética reuna obras pertenecientes a todos los siglos y a todos los principales géneros literarios; y por su parte Heinrich Morf nota el singular espectáculo de la sangrienta leyenda de los Infantes de Lara que, cruzando como una banda roja el campo heráldico de la poesía hispana, puede servir para exponer todas las vicisitudes de la literatura nacional. De igual modo, al historiar el tema del Rey Rodrigo es preciso esbozar un cuadro completo de la literatura española, en el que están representadas todas las épocas, todas las escuelas y todas las tendencias principales.

Esta íntima unidad inspiradora en la mayor variedad de los tiempos, que no se halla en ninguna otra literatura, este maravilloso rejuvenecimiento de los temas heroicos, perpetuamente renovados, este milagro poético de España, muestra bien la excepcional fuerza de la tradicionalidad primitiva, el incomparable vigor con que la épica antigua enraizó sus creaciones heroicas en el sentimiento literario y en la conciencia nacional. Y esta tradicionalidad tan activa y trasmigradora es la causa principal de la gran pérdida de los antiguos textos épicos.

Universidad de Madrid

F. S. FLINT, IMAGISM'S "MAÎTRE D'ÉCOLE"

LE ROY C. BREUNIG

EZRA POUND remarked in 1913 that all English poets since Chaucer "have gone to school to the French."¹ Perhaps of no generation was this more true than of Pound's own. Pound was convinced on the eve of the first World War that only Paris could revivify English and American poetry; and when he invented the term "imagisme" he was attempting most blatantly to create on the banks of the Thames a movement which he felt to be entirely French in spirit. Rarely since Chaucer had London seen such a conscious and organized effort not merely to "go to school to the French" but to set up a French school on home soil, manifesto and all. Perhaps only an enterprising and brash American could have carried out such a feat.

The French influence on the Imagists has been exhaustively studied by M. René Taupin,² and there is really very little that one may add to his minute analysis of the formulation of Imagist theories, the Imagist attack on didactic Victorianism as well as on the *fin-de-siècle* decadence, the battle for the *vers libre*, and above all the influence of individual French poets on each member of the Anglo-American school: Pound, Richard Aldington, H. D., F. S. Flint, Amy Lowell, and John Gould Fletcher. If we may consider Imagism, however, as a "school" in a pedagogical as well as literary sense, that is, as a grouping of poets going through a French apprenticeship without necessarily leaving London, some further elucidation can be made of the role of the member whom M. Taupin calls their "maître d'école."

F. S. Flint, perhaps the least-known member today, was the one poet in London around 1912 who was thoroughly acquainted with all the currents of modern French poetry and who enthusiastically expounded to his colleagues the various "-isms" from both banks of the Seine. With this knowledge he not only helped to launch the infatuation for France but gave the Imagists direction and ammunition in their attacks as well as models for their own creative efforts. If Pound, and after him Amy Lowell, acted as the cheer leaders of the school, supplying the huzzas, Flint more modestly provided the curriculum.

¹ "Approach to Paris," *Egoist*, Sept. 11, 1914.

² *L'influence du symbolisme français sur la poésie américaine (de 1910 à 1920)* (Paris, 1929).

The results of Flint's efforts M. Taupin has already demonstrated, especially in regard to the adoption of *vers libre*. The actual process by which Flint carried out these efforts will form the subject of this article, which will be restricted to (1) a study of his relations with the French poets of his day (including six letters, hitherto unpublished, from Marinetti, Romain, Duhamel, Vildrac, Arcos, and Apollinaire); (2) an analysis of his articles on French poetry in various London journals; and (3) an evaluation of his relations as "maître d'école" with his fellow Imagists. A considerable amount of the information in this study is based on recent correspondence with Mr. Flint, who is living in London at the present time.

One of the most striking aspects of Flint's position was that he had never been to France when Imagism was founded. All his knowledge he picked up in London, where he had lived in poverty since his birth in 1885. He first began the study of the French language at nineteen in a workingmen's night school; discovering in himself a remarkable talent as a linguist, he studied with such zeal that in a few years he had mastered ten other languages as well. French, which he succeeded in reading and writing with perfect fluency, always remained his preference; and that fact, together with his own poetical bent and his dissatisfaction with the conventionalism of most of the English poetry of his day, made him turn quite naturally to the study of French Symbolism, which Arthur Symonds had made known in England in 1899. In 1909 he published his first articles on French poets in A. R. Orage's liberal *New Age*, including brief studies on Verhaeren and Gourmont, at the same time that he was meeting with T. E. Hulme at the Soho dinners which formed the nucleus of Imagism.

By 1911 Flint's main interest had extended to the experiments of his younger contemporaries in Paris, whom he found on the whole more idealistic and energetic than the decadent *fin-de-siècle* writers of the older generation. His reputation as an authority on French poetry had meanwhile become such that Harold Munro, editor of *Poetry Review*, asked him to prepare an entire issue on the subject. This was to appear in August 1912. Flint thereupon began a lively correspondence on his own initiative with numerous contemporary French poets, although he knew none of them personally. (He was not to visit Paris until 1920.) This ignorance of *la vie littéraire* of the Parisian cafés made Flint's studies considerably more objective than they might otherwise have been. Rarely had Paris seen so many new schools fighting violently for power and supremacy than on the eve of the first World War. A critic on the scene would have found it well-nigh impossible to remain unbiased. As a quiet spectator across the Channel, a London civil servant

with time to read all the volumes sent to him, Flint was determined to present as broad and unprejudiced a survey as possible.³

The following six letters illustrate rather vividly this correspondence. They are all that remain of a fairly extensive exchange, Mr. Flint's books and papers having been totally destroyed "by the Germans in their second onslaught"⁴ in 1940. The first two, from F. T. Marinetti and Jules Romains, postmarked April 26 and June 2, 1912, are in response to queries for the *Poetry Review* survey; the following three in 1913 and early 1914 from Georges Duhamel, Charles Vildrac, and René Arcos are addressed to Flint primarily as writer of the "French Chronicles" in *Poetry and Drama*; the final communication, a post card from Guillaume Apollinaire in June 1914, refers to an article which Flint was preparing for the *Soirées de Paris*.⁵

MOVIMENTO FUTURISTA

diretto da F. T. MARINETTI

MILANO, Corso Venezia 61

Telefono 40-81

CHER CONFRÈRE,

Veuillez excuser le retard de cette réponse à votre lettre très aimable. Je suis enchanté de vous fournir tout ce qui est nécessaire pour votre article, mais je n'ai pas chez moi des exemplaires de mes œuvres françaises, et je ne pourrai vous les envoyer que dans une quinzaine de jours. Je vous enverrai en même temps mon livre *Le Futurisme*, d'où vous pourrez tirer mon opinion sur la situation poétique en France.

Je serai probablement à Londres vers la fin mai, enchanté de vous voir et de causer avec vous à ce sujet.

Veuillez agréer en attendant mes salutations très distinguées,

F. T. MARINETTI

P. S. J'arrive de Berlin, où notre Exposition triomphe. Elle passera ensuite à Bruxelles.

³ René Taupin has hinted at an ulterior motive in the seeming catholicity of Flint's taste: "On peut oublier que c'était pour recevoir de plus de livres possible qu'il avait étudié le plus d'auteurs possible..." *op. cit.*, p. 128. No doubt Flint was pinched financially at the time. His poetry gives ample evidence of the rather sordid conditions in which he and his family lived in London. In one of his "Chronicles from France" in 1913 he speaks rather wistfully of the several French poets whose works he had not seen. "I may get these books some day; but the pockets *minimorum poetarum* are not always well lined." Nevertheless, the extensiveness of Flint's survey is based on much more than a mere desire to line his library free of charge.

⁴ Personal letter.

⁵ The originals of these letters are in the Amy Lowell Collection at Houghton Library, Harvard University. Mr. Flint gave them to Amy Lowell in her suite at the Berkeley Hotel just before her departure from London at the outbreak of the war.

Marinetti's belief in Futurism as a European movement, evident in this letter, was to be stressed by Flint in his August survey. Marinetti did come to London shortly afterwards; both Flint and Harold Munro met him, gave a dinner for him, and took him to visit W. B. Yeats. Flint has described the scene. Marinetti spoke no English, Yeats no French; yet the Futurist leader "spouted" some of his rhetoric, and "Yeats was induced by Marinetti to recite in return some of his poems. Turgid bombast calling forth delicate vision."⁶

PARIS 27 bis Avenue du Parc
de Montsouris (XIV)

CHER MONSIEUR

J'ai bien reçu votre aimable lettre mais un voyage à l'étranger m'a empêché d'y répondre tout-de-suite.

Je vais vous faire envoyer *La Vie Unanime* et *Un Être en Marche*, ainsi que *Deux Poèmes*. Vous pourrez ainsi vous faire une idée de mon art.

Le livre de M. Duhamel "Propos Critiques" que vous devez avoir entre les mains, vous donnera les meilleurs renseignements sur la situation poétique actuelle en France, et en particulier sur mes idées, dans le chapitre qui me concerne.

Veuillez croire cher monsieur à ma parfaite estime.

JULES ROMAINS

As a result of this introduction to Romains, Flint devoted more space in his August survey to Unanimism than to any other single movement, maintaining the while that Romains was the only true "unanimiste" in the group. Flint's comments reflect those of Duhamel—to which, it is worth noting, Romains gives his official blessing in this letter, as perhaps the most valid exposition of his ideas.

Flint's 1912 essay on Unanimism was apparently the first to appear in England. Flint has stated: "I think it is true that I was the first to present some French writers now famous—Duhamel and Romains, for instance."⁶ His admiration for Romains as a writer was to continue, although their correspondence ended abruptly when Flint replied impatiently to Romains' objection at appearing in the article along with Henri-Martin Barzun, one of the founders of the Abbaye de Créteil whose literary efforts were not held in particular esteem by his colleagues.

Mercure de France
26, rue de Condé, 26
PARIS VIe
Paris, Le 18 janvier, 1913

CHER MONSIEUR FLINT

Je suis bien content de savoir que vous allez faire partager aux lecteurs anglais notre grande admiration pour Claudel. *Partage de midi* a été édité par l'Occident,

⁶ Personal letter.

17 rue Eblé, à Paris, en 1906. Cette édition a été faite par souscription, au prix de 5 francs le volume, je crois; mais le tirage était limité, et actuellement il n'y a plus aucun exemplaire dans le commerce. Pour les *Odes*, elles ont été également éditées par l'Occident dans un tirage de luxe à 40 fr. l'exemplaire. Il n'y en a plus que de rares exemplaires chez les bouquinistes, mais aucun dans le commerce courant.

Je peux, pour vous rassurer, vous dire confidentiellement que sans doute cette année une importante maison d'édition publiera à 3 fr. les *Odes* et *Partage de midi* —quant aux *Hymnes*, elles sont disséminées dans diverses revues; *La Phalange*, *l'Occident* et la *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Il n'est pas encore question d'en faire un volume.

Quand mon étude sur Claudel va paraître en volume ce qui est une question de jours, je vois l'enverrai.

Croyez-moi votre bien cordial

G. DUHAMEL

It was natural that Flint, in search of information on Claudel for the March 1913 issue of *Poetry and Drama*, should have turned to Duhamel, who had just published his essay in the *Mercure de France* (December 16, 1912 and January 1, 1913)—the essay appeared in book form in 1913 shortly after the foregoing letter. Flint admitted frankly in his article his debt to Duhamel's essay, as well as his inability to obtain *Partage de midi*, *Cinq grandes odes*, and *Hymnes*. After this first rather impersonal letter Duhamel and Flint continued corresponding more amicably, and when he came to London in 1920 Duhamel attended a dinner at the Café Royal with Flint sitting at his left.

15 avril, 1913
12 rue de Seine

CHER MONSIEUR FLINT

Bien merci de votre aimable lettre qui m'est parvenue trop tard pour que je puisse répondre utilement à vos questions.

Il s'agissait de démontrer par l'élection et la réception à Paris d'un "Prince des penseurs" totalement inconnu et à peu près inexistant, de démontrer, dis-je, l'incompétence de la critique et quelle confusion des valeurs peut se produire dans le public des boulevards et des journaux.

En fait, nous avons vu des critiques de grands quotidiens plus respectueux et plus généreux pour notre Brisset que pour Paul Fort et Claudel. Et hier, "Le Matin" et "Excelsior" ont reçu gravement Brisset auquel un banquet fut offert hier soir.

Quant à la joie de l'inoffensif et sympathique Brisset, elle est, bien entendu, jalousement sauvegardée, et le "Prince" n'aura à souffrir aucune désillusion.

Il a été lu au Banquet à défaut d'une lettre de vous, une lettre de Pound, (qui n'a pu malheureusement rester parmi nous.)

M. Pound est charmant et nous avons beaucoup bavardé ensemble.

Bien merci de vos lignes sympathiques, et croyez-moi, cher Monsieur Flint, bien cordialement votre

CHARLES VILDRAC

Je ne manquerai pas de transmettre vos amitiés à Romains, Duhamel et autres... "unanimistes!"

Vildrac had lectured in London on "Modern French Poetry" in November 1912, restricting his field almost exclusively to the Abbaye group and the Unanimists. Despite his admiration for these poets, Flint, always eclectic, chided Vildrac in the March 1913 issue of *Poetry and Drama* for "not acting fairly and impartially in allowing an English audience to believe that these poets alone made the 'Contemporary Movement in French Poetry.'" Nevertheless the two remained on cordial terms; the above letter is a gracious reply to an inquiry of Flint concerning one of the numerous "mystifications" of the type which Romans has described in *Les Copains*.⁷ The issue of *Le Matin* to which

⁷ A personal letter from Charles Vildrac (Aug. 2, 1950) gives the following description of the Brisset incident:

"Voici, le plus succinctement possible, en quoi a consisté 'l'affaire Brisset': Jules Romains, alors jeune professeur au lycée de Laon, trouva un jour, sur la table de la bibliothèque des professeurs, deux volumes qui venaient d'y parvenir: 'Les origines humaines' et la 'Grammaire logique,' dont l'auteur était Jean Pierre Brisset, inspecteur des chemins de fer en retraite. Romains ouvrit les deux livres et s'en amusa fort: Brisset avait entrepris de démontrer que l'homme descend de la grenouille; et d'autre part, sa 'grammaire logique' fondait l'étymologie des mots sur le calembour. (Par exemple: La misère est au logis, l'époux vend la table, cet époux vend table, c'est épouvantable.) Il découvrait d'autre part dans nombre de mots des allusions érotiques.

"On venait d'élire à Paris, après le prince des poètes, Paul Fort, un prince des conteurs, Han Ryner, cette dernière élection plutôt ridicule. Romains qui a toujours eu le goût des mystifications, nous proposa, à quelques-uns, Arcos, Duhamel, Durtain, Chennevière et moi-même, de provoquer par manifeste l'élection d'un Prince des Penseurs et de faire élire Brisset. L'idée fut lancée gravement dans la presse, à l'aide de communiqués. Des écrivains, des peintres, des revues, envoyèrent leur vote à une certaine 'Société d'Idéologie,' dont le siège avait été établi chez le concierge d'une salle d'armes, Impasse Royer Collard—Naturellement, l'élection fut truquée. Le dépouillement eut lieu au Café de la Place Blanche devant une foule de peintres de Montmartre, d'étudiants, d'amis complices. Brisset fut élu contre Bergson, Boutroux, Jaurès, M. de Noailles, Cécile Sorel etc. Notre candidat était au courant. Il reçut la nouvelle de son élection par télégramme et répondit, par télégramme aussi: 'J'envoie mes livres à tous les maires de France.'

"Et une réception de Brisset fut organisée à Paris. Une pseudo société de la Comédie Française, à l'arrivée du Prince des Penseurs, à la gare Montparnasse, déclama une ode dont J. Romains était l'auteur. Il y eut manifestations et discours devant le 'Penseur' de Rodin, conférence de Brisset aux Sociétés Savantes et le soir, après réceptions dans diverses rédactions de journaux, banquet de trois cents convits, où furent lus, vrais ou faux, des télégrammes d'écrivains anglais, américains, espagnols, etc. Nous avions mis Pound et Flint au courant en leur demandant d'expédier quelque message de félicitation à Brisset. La journée fut inénarrable. Le vieux Brisset, certainement un peu fou mais très sympathique se montra tout à fait à la hauteur de la situation et nous eûmes surtout le souci de lui conserver toutes ses illusions. Il s'en retourna glorieux dans son Poitou. Il est mort au cours de la guerre 14-18.

"Voilà, en gros, ce que fut l'affaire Brisset. Un article du Figaro nous accusa, peu après d'avoir mystifié, bafoué un vieillard. Romains répondit en protestant que nous placions Brisset bien au dessus d'Edmond Rostand dans l'art du calembour. Et Brisset ses écrivit qu'il s'attendait bien à ce que ses disciples fussent persécutés et qu'il nous en aimait davantage.

"Luc Durtain fait allusion à l'affaire Brisset dans son dernier livre: 'Première

Vildrac refers (April 14, 1913) describes Pierre Brisset as an honest and obscure citizen of Angers whom several left-bank pranksters had duped completely with the title "Prince des penseurs" and a special invitation to Paris. The tone of the *Matin* article is not at all "grave," as Vildrac implies, in its description of the noisy reception at the gare Montparnasse, the acclamations in front of the Pantheon, Brisset's introduction to the "Penseur" of Rodin, his discourse on the origins of man at the Société des Savants, and the grandiose banquet attended by "une foule avide de vérité." Vildrac was thinking more probably of the conclusion of the article which, in something of a right-bank, moralizing tone, deplores the fact that Brisset, "le pauvre vieillard, venu de l'Anjou pour cueillir la gloire, ne l'avait connue qu'à travers la plaisanterie outrée de quelques joyeux drilles." The end of Vildrac's letter carries a possible implication that Flint and Pound were a party to the affair; but Flint, at least, maintains that he had "nothing whatever" to do with this "cruel joke."

Expédié par
M. René Arcos
PARIS Bd. Montparnasse No. 52
9 janvier 1914

CHER MONSIEUR,

J'ai lu dans "Poetry and Drama" votre article sur *l'Île Perdue* et vous en remercie. Certes, je ne suis pas toujours de votre avis, et quand je vous vois vous intéresser à un "veal" comme Bauduin [*sic*] ou ce Barzun, j'en ai du chagrin, mais je vous loue grandement de l'affection que vous portez aux lettres françaises. Je pense qu'il doit être bien difficile à un étranger de se reconnaître dans un tel chaos! et vous avez bien le droit de vous tromper quelquefois. L'imprimerie et l'édition sont publiques en France. C'est pourquoi romanciers et poètes publient 50 volumes par jour! Et il se publie peut-être 10 bons livres par an! Comment aller les trouver parmi l'amoncellement des navets? Il faut plaindre les pauvres critiques, et non les condamner.

Si vous venez un jour à Paris ne manquez pas, cher Monsieur, de frapper à ma porte. J'ai hâte de serrer votre main, ce que je ne peux faire qu'idéalement sur cette carte.

voire
RENÉ ARCOS

Flint's "French Chronicle" in the December 1913 issue of *Poetry and Drama* prompted this letter. After a description of the Vieux Colombier project, he had commented on four plays, just published: Pierre-Jean Jouve's *Les Deux Forces*, Duhamel's *Le Combat*, *L'Île perdue* of Arcos, and Miguel Mañara of O.-W. Milosz. Nothing in Flint's straightforward résumé of *L'Île perdue* could have annoyed its author. In his conclusion, however, he states: "But perhaps the most bourgeois," tome III des *Mémoires de votre vie*. Il y donne à Brisset le nom de Ledru."

completely satisfying of the four dramatic works before me is M. O. W. Milosz's *Miguel Mañara* . . . In the other three, you feel that the technician or the philosopher is in the foreground, in M. Milosz's work, the poet." It is this remark only which could have called forth the "Je ne suis pas toujours de votre avis" of Arcos. As for "Bauduin" and Barzun, Flint had not mentioned them since June of 1913, when he had spoken in passing of a new anthology by Nicholas Bauduin, the leader of "paroxysme," in which Arcos and the other Unanimists were of course not represented. Flint had also referred briefly to Barzun's division of contemporary French poets into "intuitives" and "visionaries." As a good "visionary" Barzun had declared war on the "intuitives," who included Romains, Vildrac, Arcos, and company. Flint himself had remained above the battle. It is noteworthy that Arcos echoes the violent disdain of Romains for Barzun, although as one of the founders of the Abbaye de Créteil Arcos had been even closer to him.

The shortest and certainly the most picturesque of these communications to F. S. Flint is a post card from Guillaume Apollinaire, postmarked Paris, June 7, 1914. The left half of the side reserved for correspondence shows a photograph of the "Salle d'expédition" of the "Destillerie [*sic*] de Kirsch de l'Abbaye de Fontgombault (Indre)." After the blatant letterhead of Marinetti in large red type, "Movimento Futurista," and the more sedate "Mercure de France" letterhead of Duhamel, Flint now received this liqueur-manufacturing scene of a little penal colony in a former abbey of the Loire Valley, on which Apollinaire had hastily written, in all probability from a Paris café terrace, the following concise but gracious note:

CHER MONSIEUR, nous attendons votre article avec impatience. Il sera mis au point. Je crois au demeurant qu'il n'y aura rien à changer, car vous écrivez le français fort bien.

Merci donc et cordialement à vous

GUILLAUME APOLLINAIRE
202 Bd. St. Germain

Avez-vous reçu le no. de mai des *Soirées*?

Apollinaire was director of the *Soirées de Paris* at this time, having bought the review from André Billy at the end of 1913. He printed Flint's article, a history of Imagism, without alterations in the July 1914 issue. Flint also wrote an article on the same subject for *L'Art Libre* of Brussels. These were the only contributions which he made on the continent.

Flint had contacts, both cordial and acrimonious, with several other French poets. When André Spire arrived in London at the beginning of the war they became friends, and it was with Spire that the English poet stayed during his 1920 visit to Paris. A natural affinity united these

two men, the same "clairvoyant irony, tenderness and passionate humanity" which Flint had noted in Spire's works in 1912 before knowing him personally. Through Spire he was introduced to several new French personalities and was honored at a special party given for him in Paris by Luc Durtain where he met Valéry Larbaud, Bazalgette, and "others of the Jules Romains, Duhamel circle." It was also with Spire that Flint attended a literary gathering where he sat behind Alexandre Mercereau, a former member of the Abbaye group and one of the editors of *Vers et Prose*. Mercereau had apparently tried to indoctrinate Flint when he was writing the August number.

He put me on to a number of writers—all of them stunners like the paroxyste gentleman, Beaudouin [*sic*]. I said to him that our correspondence had developed to a point where it had become *plutôt acerbe*, and he implied that that was not his fault. He had tried to palm off his friends on me as true poets, and to make me believe that the unanimist crowd were a lot of no-goods.⁸

In effect Flint admits here that he had been partially duped by Mercereau, for in the August essay of 1912 he had described him as a "very active critic, with a formidable erudition, and a most disinterested propagandist in the field of art, ever ready to publish the merit of other artists, expending his energies prodigally wherever art or life may be served."

Flint's only other continental contacts during the war were with two Belgian poets. When Verhaeren at the height of his fame visited London in 1915, several months before his death, Flint, who had helped considerably to establish his reputation in England, received him at the Poetry Bookshop on Devonshire Street and acted as his host and guide for the several days he remained. The following year he published his translation, *The Love Poems of Emile Verhaeren*, in London. His acquaintance with Jean de Bosschère, the Belgian poet and illustrator, led him to publish *The Closed Door*, translated from the *Portes fermées*, in 1917.

What emerges most strikingly perhaps from Flint's personal contacts with the French poets of his day is his own lack of *parti pris*, his eager desire to know every possible writer regardless of school. What impressed him most about the literary scene in Paris was its vitality, the spirit of lively experimenting, the adventurous daring as opposed to what he felt to be a rather deadly traditionalism in London. And, although his personal preference seems to have been for the Unanimist group, he never forgot his principal goal, which was to learn all the "-isms" without submerging himself in any one of them. He was consequently just as annoyed at Jules Romains for attempting to push Barzun off the stage as with Mercereau for trying to do likewise to Romains. Yet Flint loved this passion of the French poets with their violent bat-

⁸ Personal letter.

tles, and it was the same effervescence which he hoped to introduce into England.

Flint has published articles on French poetry in the following periodicals:

The New Age. A series of ten essays and book reviews, extending from Oct. 29, 1908 to Feb. 3, 1910, on recent English and French poetry, including articles on Rémy de Gourmont (July 8, 1909), Emile Verhaeren (Aug. 5, 1909), and an impassioned plea for Symbolism à propos of a review of an anthology by Francis Eccles (Sept. 30, 1909).

The Poetry Review. A special issue, Aug. 1912, entitled "Contemporary French Poetry."

Poetry and Drama. Eight "French Chronicles," appearing each quarter from March 1913 through Dec. 1914.

London Times Literary Supplement. Numerous brief articles and book reviews throughout 1919 and 1920, and especially one leading article entitled "French War Poetry," Oct. 2, 1919.

The Monthly Chapbook, Vol. I, No. 4, Oct. 1919, a special issue entitled "Some French Poets of Today," and Vol. II, No. 17, Nov. 1920, an issue entitled "The Younger French Poets."

The same catholicity of interests which impelled him in his personal contacts, the same enthusiasm for any new adventurer in poetic techniques regardless of manifestoes, governed as well the tone of his critical surveys, of which the most important is his seventy-page article in *Poetry Review*. Harold Munro, editor of the magazine, stated the following credo in the introductory "Notes and Comments" of this issue, which Flint then proceeded to illustrate:

If we are forced to admit that the English literary public, as a whole, cares very little for contemporary poetry, we will not consent to believe it is entirely the public's own fault. Literary France, as Mr. Flint explains this month, is alive to poetry because poetry is alive to it. There the poet throws himself against life; he sets his teeth into the apple; he laughs the devil in the face. But we are still haunted by the tradition of the big figure, the *vates*, the man apart; we refuse to believe in experimental poetry—we laugh without testing, we reject without reading. There are dozens of good poets in France. Contemporary criticism cannot attempt to decide between them, but it does not ignore them; if the truth be told they will not have themselves ignored. They are not content to sit in dusty old corners and write quatrains and hexameters; they have such urgent facts to sing that they must invent new ways of singing them. Then inevitably they must all criticize each other's different new ways, and they become so keenly excited about it that the public is obliged to wonder what can be happening.

We believe that out of indefatigable discussion, unending fearless experiment, the great poet emerges . . .

The purpose of Flint's article was quite simply to engender a little more "indefatigable discussion" on his side of the Channel. The one theme which he had hammered at time and again in his earlier *New Age* articles was that "Old England is senile" but that France is alive and

bubbling; in his enthusiasm he had even tried his own hand in French verse (before J. G. Fletcher or T. S. Eliot), and published a short piece, "Violettes," in the *New Age* in January 1909. And now in the August essay he spread forth the richness of "experimental poetry" on the other side of the Channel. His introduction emphasizes the Symbolist movement as a revolt. "What was symbolism? First of all a contempt for the wordy flamboyance of the romanticists; secondly a reaction against the impassive descriptiveness of the Parnassians, thirdly a disgust of the 'slice of life' of the naturalists." In 1885 French poetry had become stagnant. (The parallel between the Paris of 1885 and the London of 1912 is obvious.) With its worn-out rhymes "the exhausted Parnassus sank into an idiocy of echolalia." Rebelling against the servility to traditional prosody, the Symbolists created a new manner, the *vers libre*. It is in his defense of *vers libre* that Flint speaks with all the passion of the convert. For him this was the greatest technical acquisition of Symbolism. In his descriptions of the other experiments he somehow remains the Londoner, sympathetic, indeed enthusiastic, but slightly, ever so slightly amused by the battles on the Seine. With *vers libre*, however, he takes up his cudgel and fights frantically. Flint also approved the Symbolists' restoration of assonance in French poetry and, referring to Duhamel and Vildrac's *Notes sur la technique poétique*, which had appeared in 1911, indicated that with many of the younger generation rhyme had fallen into complete disrepute.

From the "generation of 1900" Flint selects three important tendencies represented by poets among the "Demi-Aînés": Henri Ghéon, Jean Royère, and André Spire. In Ghéon he hails a representative of the "renaissance of poetical drama which has been preparing for some time past in France, and which seems to be on the point of complete fruition." Throughout his entire article, as a matter of fact, Flint will emphasize the rebirth of this genre as one of the great accomplishments of twentieth-century France, an art "where poets speak the language of inspiration and intuition to assembled men." Royère and the group of *La Phalange* represent "neo-Mallarmisme," or the continuation of the concept that "the poet must recreate his soul, empty his mind of reminiscences, and let his poetry become a creation, whose source is necessarily his interior being—a discovery concrete and sensuous." The noble tendencies of Spire's poetry make Flint forget momentarily any aesthetic or technical considerations. John Gould Fletcher has said that Flint's dominating characteristic was "a pathetic sincerity";⁹ in Spire Flint found a kindred soul with passionate humaneness "whose heart has been wrung by the spectacle of life, which he has seen with the curiously keen and unsophisticated vision of a child with a man's intelligence." In all

⁹ J. G. Fletcher, *Life is My Song* (New York, 1937), p. 76.

three poets Flint extols the use of free rhythmic forms and the rarity of rhyme.

More than half of the remaining portion of the survey is devoted to the Abbaye de Créteil and Unanimism. For the first time the English reader was treated to a detailed description of these two closely related groups, probably the most notorious among the younger schools before the war. After a vivid description of the founding of the Abbaye and of the sincere and idealistic spirit which prompted it, and brief portraits of some of the minor members, Flint introduces Romains, Duhamel, Arcos, and Vildrac under the heading "Unanimism," distinguishing among the various types of Unanimism which they represent. "M. Romains considers life in relation to the god crowd; M. Arcos, in relation to the birth of god in man; M. Vildrac in relation to the human being, its common humanity; and M. Duhamel, in relation to himself." Flint's own affinity to these "men of good will" is apparent from the sympathetic tone of his treatment.

The last part of the survey presents a miscellaneous assortment of schools and individuals with almost no attempt at discrimination: Lucien Rolmer and "L'Ecole de grâce"; Beauduin and "Le Paroxysme"; Florian-Parmentier and "L'Impulsionnisme"; Tancrède de Visan as the theorist of Symbolism; Marinetti and the Futurists; etc. There is no conclusion. Flint makes no effort to deduce any general tendencies among the array of "-isms." He simply exclaims: "I salute in the poets of France an inextinguishable vitality!"

Nevertheless, certain recurrent themes which he perhaps unwittingly emphasized were bound to strike the reader of the *Poetry Review*: (1) the vast amount of technical experimentation in France, the desire to go beyond the conquests of *vers libre* (Ghéon's "analytical strophe," Périn's supplé "métrique," the "rhythmic constant" of Duhamel and Vildrac, and the "rapport de sonorités" of Romains); (2) closely related, the disappearance of the hard barrier between poetry and prose, since the essence of poetry lies more in its imagery and emotional intensity than in any fixed metrical principles (Flint calls Paul Adam and Rosny "poets," and Mercereau's *Paroles devant la vie*, despite their prose form, are "poetry"); (3) the concept of the poet as a superior, privileged being, a kind of demiurge (the inspired states of the "paroxystes," the "impulsionnistes," and the futurists); (4) the development of poetic drama as a rich new genre (especially in Ghéon, Barzun, and Romains); and (5) the sincere idealism pervading this generation in its reaction against the earlier *fin-de-siècle* despair (Flint was particularly impressed by the thesis of Tancrède de Visan that there was a close relationship between the philosophy of Bergson and the new poetry).

In retrospect it is easy, while accepting these observations of Flint, to criticize his choice of examples, especially since he was emphasizing avant-garde movements. Where are Claudel, Valéry, Péguy, and Apollinaire, who certainly tower above all those whom he presents? There is no doubt that Flint was at least partially influenced by the active *vie littéraire* in Paris as it happened to exist in 1912, and propagandists like Mercereau succeeded to a certain extent in distorting his view. Yet it must be remembered that Claudel had been in the Orient, his works had appeared in very limited editions, and until the production of *L'Annonce faite à Marie* at the end of 1912 his name was on relatively few lips. Valéry was in the midst of his twenty-year retirement. Most of Paris considered Péguy's *Cahiers* as a political and polemical publication, and the beauties of *Jeanne d'Arc* and *Eve* had not yet been discovered. Apollinaire was not to publish his first collection of poems, *Alcools*, until the following year.

Flint himself soon realized the important lacunae in his survey and set about to fill some of them in his "French Chronicles" of 1913 and 1914. These eight articles, each one approximately ten pages long, are broadly informative surveys, like his August essay, rather than dogmatic or conclusive studies; yet in the choice of subjects one notices more discernment. Their importance lies above all in their being in many cases among the first to acquaint English and American readers with that sudden explosion of rich talent which has made 1913 one of the milestones of modern French literature. Flint describes Lugné-Poë's presentation of *L'Annonce* (end of 1912), emphasizing Claudel's "cadenced speech" which "pours forth with changing speeds of dramatic necessity." Claudel is definitely the leading dramatist of France, whose "characters are creations worthy, I think, to be mentioned with Shakespeare's finest." Flint notes the rising interest in Rimbaud, à propos of Claudel's preface to his *Œuvres complètes* which had just appeared, and the importance of the *Nouvelle Revue Française* as the leading vanguard periodical, and gives a graphic description of the genesis of Jacques Copeau's Vieux Colombier experiment. One of his most detailed studies treats the "Poètes fantaisistes," where as usual he emphasizes the technical innovations: the original rhymes of Derème (d'où-ce—douce; malgré que—grecque, etc.); the form of the *Contrerimes* of Toulet, "the most impeccable of the fantaisiste group"; Apollinaire's suppression of punctuation in *Alcools*. Flint, incidentally, did not fully realize at this time the originality of Apollinaire—somewhat like Duhamel, who saw in him little more than a "brocanteur."

In the course of a further discussion of Futurism and Marinetti's *mots en liberté*, Flint indulges in one of his rare moments of direct preaching to his English audience.

Without going so far as M. Marinetti, we may ask ourselves what is the use, for instance, of lyrical syntax in poetry? Why we should have so absolute a respect for the integrity of words? Whether poetry will not finally develop into a series of emotional ejaculations, cunningly modulated, and coloured by a swift play of subtle and far-reaching analogies? Are we not really spellbound by the past, and is the *Georgian Anthology* really an expression of the age? I doubt it. I doubt whether English poets are really alive to what is around them . . .

Here again one sees Flint's tendency to apologize for the most revolutionary schools, even against his own taste and judgment, provided they help a little to jolt the English poet from his traditionalism.

With the same open-mindedness he tries to appreciate the poetry of Pierre-Jean Jouve in *Parler*. It is obscure; Flint admits that he is not overwhelmed by it. Yet he eloquently defends this obscurity as a legitimate form of poetic creation. "Jouve translates his emotions by means of an immediate expression of his sensations." The obscurity arises from his rejection not only of the clichés of phraseology but from "his rejection of the clichés of sensation." If there is a barrier between us and him, it is in our own habits of thought and feeling. But with all his good will Flint implies that the barrier still remains. His discovery of Péguy, on the other hand, has all the "immediacy" of a true illumination. The outbreak of the war certainly contributed, and Flint in the September 1914 issue of *Poetry and Drama* would in any case have expressed his deep love for France, but it becomes incarnate in Péguy whose *Choix de poésies* he had just seen. In the September and especially in the December and final issue of *Poetry and Drama*, he makes a detailed study of Péguy, emphasizing above all his sincerity and idealism; but as always Flint is careful to analyze the form of poetic expression, and in particular Péguy's love of repetition and enumeration. His poetry "has the simplicity of a catalogue; but such a catalogue of vehemence and fire and faith that one feels that its author was the living and passionate inventory of the world—his world—of good and evil."

Although Flint does not forget his Unanimist friends (and Barzun and Beauduin) in these "Chronicles," he perhaps shows a little more independence and original critical ability than in his 1912 survey. His greater emphasis on Claudel and Péguy, on the renewal of interest in Rimbaud, and on experiments such as the *NRF* and the Vieux Colombier indicates a flair for the most valuable in the literary maze of Paris. It must be remembered at the same time, of course, that Flint, like most of his contemporaries, still considered Verhaeren as the greatest living poet in Europe and Apollinaire as just one more *fantaisiste* to be presented jointly with Philéas Lebesgue.

Throughout the war Flint, who held a government position in London, managed to retain his contacts with the French literary scene, and in an entire issue of Harold Munro's *Chapbook*, the successor of *Poetry*

and *Drama* after the Armistice, he described the war poetry of France (October 1919). Although he continued the survey method, endeavoring in his description of eighteen poets to maintain an attitude of strict neutrality, his critical acumen shows itself in his choice and order of presentation. He rejects completely any verse that smacks of chauvinistic rhetoric and *bourrage de crâne* for the simpler and more daring examples of what Apollinaire had dubbed the *esprit nouveau*. The Unanimists yield their priority of 1912 to Apollinaire, whose poetic testament, "La Jolie Rousse," Flint presents to the English reader for the first time; to Jean Cocteau, "more boisterous, less poetic than Apollinaire"; and to Paul Eluard, whose short poems in *Le Devoir et l'Inquiétude* seem to have been conceived "in a state of mind bordering on hallucination." Flint nevertheless retains his faithful enthusiasm for Romain, praising his *Europe* as "one of the few valid works of art incited by the war" and opposing Romain as an apostle of humanity to Drieu La Rochelle. Despite his extravagant eulogies of Claudel as a dramatist five years earlier, he unwillingly admits that the Roman Catholic inspiration in Claudel's war poetry leaves him cold. "It is very sad to feel alien to so much magnificence."

This survey with certain revisions and excisions appeared also as the leading article in the *Times Literary Supplement* for October 2, 1919. Throughout 1919 and 1920 Flint served as the *Times* critic of French poetry. He was older now and moving in more respectable circles. His position on the *Times* he had obtained from the editor, Bruce Richmond, through the good offices of Robert Bridges, poet laureate. One would expect a more stolid, conservative outlook, but "I am in favor of every audacity," he said in his final study on France in the November 1920 issue of *The Chapbook*. The subject was Dada. This new "-ism" tested his good will to the utmost, yet he insisted upon making an accurate and unbiased study. "Some rumor of the Dada Movement has already reached England. One or two of the literary weeklies have given a hint or a slight and slighting account of it." Flint's article was the first to look somewhat deeper. He points out Gide's benevolent support, and is particularly receptive to Jacques Rivière's classicist explanation of Dada as the logical and understandable conclusion to a trend which during the last hundred years has made a "whole line of writers look upon literature as a mere exteriorisation of themselves." This exteriorization, says Flint, has reached the point where they offer every idea that passes through their heads as a true image of their minds. "It is like skimming the scum off the refining cauldron and offering it as a sample of purity and sweetness." Yet among the members (Tzara, Picabia, Eluard, Breton, Soupault, Aragon) Flint tries generously to quote works with the least "scum," and it is to Eluard that he gives the palm. Eluard at

least does endeavor to communicate with his readers. Flint is particularly sympathetic to his appeal for simplicity and his rejection of poetic diction. He quotes the "Poisson" from *Les Animaux et leurs hommes* as a refreshing example. Breton, however, is rejected precisely because Flint is in favor "of every audacity." In *Les Champs magnétiques* there is no daring whatsoever, "only a mournful resignation to the suggestion of the moment." On the whole one senses acute disappointment throughout this article. He has espoused every vanguard movement in France because of its vigor and vitality, but what is this new monster that has risen out of postwar France? With all the will in the world he tries to understand why this movement exists and to make an apology for it, but basically he has no sympathy whatsoever, and the Channel suddenly seems much wider than in those last years before the war. The article on Dada was his last on French poetry. In 1920 also his own final volume of poetry, *Otherworld Cadences*, appeared. For personal reasons Flint withdrew abruptly from the literary scene and in the following years published nothing except several translations of biography and fiction.

From these articles as a whole there emerges one dominant message—the need for experimentation. Poetry is a craft, and good poets must constantly be perfecting new techniques. They must have the enthusiasm of innovators and an effervescent group spirit which allows them to criticize themselves and each other. Paris is an experimental laboratory, and we can learn the new theories which are spouting there. Flint wrote his surveys, not for any leisurely reading public, but for the young English poets themselves. His usual method was to present succinctly the basic doctrines of a specific French school, describe its technical principles, quote a series of well-chosen examples of poetry in the original, and indicate his references and sources, hoping thereby to interest some English poet sufficiently so that he would carry on.

If we view his articles in this light they take on considerable historical importance, despite their relative lack of value today as definitive critical studies. The first essays helped to create an interest in contemporary French poetry among his associates, and the later ones fed it. It is rather anomalous that the survey which shows perhaps the least critical discrimination, which contains the most flotsam of now forgotten schools and writers, the August 1912 essay, was the most influential. The timing was perfect. It made the nucleus of the still unformed school of Imagism realize that the new techniques and the new poetic faith in the contemporary spirit which they were searching for had already been found in France. This August number was the only number of the *Poetry Review* which sold out completely,¹⁰ and its salute to the "inextinguishable vital-

¹⁰ "... until Harold [Munro] discovered, after the demand had ceased, that he had put away in a cupboard, and forgotten, a hundred copies." F. S. Flint, personal letter.

ity" in Paris inflamed the younger poets in London. Flint relates that "before August, 1912, Ezra Pound used to say that he knew no French poetry after Villon. After August 1912, he became like a cat in heat. He told my wife in the Ristorante Italiano, Soho, that if I didn't write the book (on modern French poetry) *he* would. He could not hold himself."¹¹ And Flint maintains that Pound invented the name of the new school by "taking the *Image* from T. E. Hulme and the *ism* from my August number."

Once Flint had opened his eyes Ezra Pound threw himself passionately (but not too thoroughly) into the study of modern French poetics, continued to dig independently, and of course outdistanced Flint both creatively and in influence, reaching the high point, perhaps, in his February 1918 issue of *The Little Review* which was purely and simply an anthology of modern French poetry. It would be unjust to the role of Flint, however, to ignore the direction of Pound's pursuits. When, for example, he quotes Duhamel and Vildrac's *Notes sur la technique poétique* to support his theories of unrhymed cadence in *Poetry* (Chicago) in March 1913, Pound is relying on a work which without Flint he might quite probably have not known. John Gould Fletcher has described his first meeting with Pound, who had left London and was living in Paris in the spring of 1913. Immediately the conversation turned to *vers libre*. "It involved reference to so many critics and theorists whose works I had not read, from Gustave Kahn down to the Italian futurists that I decided to keep silence."¹² Flint, back home in London, could certainly take a considerable amount of credit for the array of knowledge with which Pound was impressing Fletcher.

With Pound converted to the vigor of the new French poetry, Flint's task as a proselytizer was well-nigh complete, and he assumed the role of a rather unwilling John the Baptist whose more boisterous messiah carried on the job of gaining disciples. It was the dynamic personality of Pound rather than the self-effacing mildness of Flint which made Francophiles of Aldington, H. D., and Amy Lowell. As for Fletcher, the last member of the group, he is usually considered to have come upon the French inspiration independently. Amy Lowell tells us rather ambiguously that at Harvard from 1904 to 1907 he "embarked on a course of Gautier and Baudelaire,"¹³ implying that he learned French thoroughly at the time. "The French language was just what he needed to give his work that severe grounding in technique without which no poet can ever be sure of mastery." Actually Fletcher read Gautier and Baudelaire in translation, and it was not until the late fall of 1912 when he

¹¹ Personal letter.

¹² John Gould Fletcher, *Life is My Song* (New York, 1937), p. 60.

¹³ Amy Lowell, *Tendencies in Modern American Poetry* (Boston, 1917), p. 288.

went from London to live in Paris for the first time that he "began to study the French language seriously," as he himself says.¹⁴ For three years he had lived in London, a lonely interloper trying to break into the rather exclusive avant-garde circles such as Harold Munro's Poetry Book Shop, which published the *Poetry Review*. He also mentions Orage's *New Age* as one of the young periodicals which attracted his attention during the same period, and it is quite possible that his eyes fell on Flint's articles in both publications, although he did not actually meet Flint and the other Imagists until after his return from Paris.

Flint's job from 1913 on consisted primarily of feeding the appetite which he had helped to create. His colleagues recognized him without question as the leading authority on French poetry, their mentor and information booth. Richard Aldington considered him in 1914 the only Englishman with "sufficiently omnivorous habits to read *all* the modern French poetry published. Whenever I meet Mr. Flint, I say to him, 'Well, I've read the latest thing from Paris you told me about the other day.'" To which Flint would reply that the work was already out of date and hurry on. "I can't stop now, because I have six new Fantaisiste authors, two volumes of Apollinaire and thirty-two other books by representatives of sixteen different schools to review by Saturday." ¹⁵ It was Flint who offered advice to Amy Lowell in the preparation of her *Six French Poets*, advice which unfortunately she did not always follow. Why include Samain? Flint had asked, for example, and with considerably more acumen than Amy Lowell realized at the time.

Other poets, outside the Imagist group, also recognized Flint's position as chief liaison figure with the prewar literary Paris. Robert Bridges in 1922, although objecting to his theories on free verse, recognized him as the authority who "has long been keeping us in touch with contemporary French verse."¹⁶ When Herbert Read, looking back two decades later upon the development of the modern movement in England, pointed out that the "modification of Browning's influence on the younger poets came from France—from Rimbaud and Laforgue and from the early verse of Duhamel, Jules Romains, Jean de Bosschère, André Spire and Apollinaire,"¹⁷ he was referring in the case of the latter five poets to figures who had first crossed the Channel under the auspices of Flint, a fact which Read himself realized, for he states shortly afterwards that "Flint had far more to do with the development of the Imagist school than has generally been acknowledged."

¹⁴ John Gould Fletcher, *op. cit.*, p. 37.

¹⁵ Richard Aldington, "Some Recent French Poets," *The Egoist*, June 15, 1914.

¹⁶ Robert Bridges, "Humdrum and Harum-Scarum, a Lecture on Free Verse," in his *Collected Essays* (London-Oxford, 1930), p. 36.

¹⁷ Herbert Read, *Annals of Innocence and Experience* (London, 1940), p. 96.

Flint then was, as he himself has admitted, the "*boute-en-train* of the interest in modern French poetry."¹⁸ Two dominant traits in his character prevented him, however, from being a prime mover and restricted his role to that of transport agent. In the first place, there was that all-embracing, encyclopaedic enthusiasm, which made him feel that he did not know the French literary landscape until he was thoroughly acquainted with every bush and blade. Had he selected only one of the numerous currents in Paris and crusaded passionately for it, closing his eyes to all others, he would certainly have succeeded more readily in creating that effervescence which he so passionately desired in London. But a "survey course" rarely causes violent discussion, and Flint by his own nature found himself in the dilemma of wishing at the same time to generate passion and to remain coolly objective. His sense of fair play and his overall sympathy for France—the rather naive sympathy of one who had never been there—obliged him to give equal publicity to every movement and considerably stifled the critical insight which he definitely possessed. Only in the battle for *vers libre* did the mild-mannered Flint become a fanatical crusader, and quite naturally this was his most successful battle, as the objections of Robert Bridges testify and as René Taupin has thoroughly demonstrated.

In the second place, Flint's unobtrusiveness, that quality which Aldington has called "an almost imbecile modesty,"¹⁹ kept him constantly in the shadowy background at the Imagist gatherings. With a more solid knowledge of French literature than Pound, with more discrimination than Amy Lowell, and certainly as zealous as both, he nevertheless lacked the dynamic flame of these two Americans who were both messiahs, born and bred. Flint's modesty has even obscured the magnitude of the very necessary function which he performed. His fellow Imagists have never paid tribute to his accomplishments; yet, as M. Taupin has conclusively demonstrated, the theories of Imagism owed as much to the contemporary poets of France as to the first or second generation of Symbolists; and these theories could certainly never have been formulated or illustrated without the assiduous labors of F. S. Flint as "maître d'école."

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¹⁸ Personal letter.

¹⁹ Quoted by Glenn Hughes, *Imagism and the Imagists* (Stanford University, 1931), p. 165.

THE PERSIAN POETRY FAD IN ENGLAND, 1770-1825

JOHN D. YOHANNAN

THERE IS no thorough study of English Orientalism during the Romantic Age comparable to Samuel Chew's treatment of Islam in English literature of the Renaissance¹ or Martha P. Conant's study of the Oriental tale in English literature of the eighteenth century.² Contributions to such a study have been made: Edna Osborne's "Oriental Diction and Theme in English Verse 1740-1840,"³ Wallace C. Brown's several articles on the Near East in English literature of about the same period,⁴ and Harold Wiener's analysis of Byron's "Turkish Tales."⁵ The present article is concerned primarily with the Persian element in that Oriental complex—a limitation which is perhaps justified by the pre-eminence of Persian poetry over the poetry of other Asiatic nations as an influence upon English literature of this period.

What distinguishes the Orientalism of the Romantic Age from the earlier manifestations is that the last quarter of the eighteenth century saw the establishment, in England, of a genuine, firsthand study of the languages of Persia, Arabia, Turkey, and India. This enabled English writers to deal with original Oriental works, or at least with direct translations of them into English. By contrast, the Renaissance Englishman had known of the East almost exclusively through travel books written by men unfamiliar with the languages of the countries they visited. The early Enlightenment had learned about the literature of Asia, to be sure, but only by way of French and Latin versions of it, or through imitations of those versions inspired by the success of Galland's translation of the *Arabian Nights*. The true beginnings of Oriental studies in England are to be found in the work of Sir William Jones from about 1770 to his death in 1794, and in the uses to which his philological and literary researches were put by the agents of the East India Company when that enterprise was brought more closely under

¹ *The Crescent and the Rose* (New York, 1937).

² *The Oriental Tale in England in the Eighteenth Century* (New York, 1908).

³ *Bulletin of the University of Kansas Humanistic Studies*, II (1916).

⁴ "The Popularity of English Travel Books about the Near East, 1775-1825," *Philological Quarterly*, XV (1936), 70; "English Travel Books and Minor Poetry about the Near East, 1775-1825," *Ibid.*, XVI (1937), 249; "Byron and English Interest in the Near East," *Studies in Philology*, XXXIV (1937), 55; "Thomas Moore and English Interest in the Near East," *ibid.*, p. 576; and "Prose Fiction and English Interest in the Near East, 1775-1825," *PMLA*, LIII (1938), 827.

⁵ "Byron and the East: Literary Sources of the 'Turkish Tales,'" *Nineteenth Century Studies*, ed. Davis, DeVane, and Bald (Ithaca, 1940), pp. 89 ff.

the British Crown by the India Act of 1784.

The interrelation of Jones's at first academic linguistic studies with the practical application made of them following the change of status of the Indian empire is well illustrated by the different fate that befell the Oriental investigations of Thomas Gray a generation earlier. Shortly after the year 1755, Gray had written a pair of essays on India and Persia, based upon such Oriental learning as could then be garnered from the European languages, both ancient and modern. But these essays were not published until 1814, when the editor, Thomas Mathias, prefaced the following note to them:

They were indeed composed at a time when the classical distinctions of Indian geography were only sought for on the disinterested principles of liberal investigation, not on those of policy nor of the regulation of trade, nor the extension of empire, nor of permanent establishments...⁶

That is to say, the earlier antiquarian attitude towards the Orient had changed within a half century to one of lively and current interest. Even Sir William Jones, before he went to India as a judge in 1784, was threatening, as he wrote to Edward Gibbon, to drown his Persian books deeper than plummet ever sounded if he could not get patronage for them.⁷ The turn of events in India saved his studies from that end.

As late as 1764 the energetic Warren Hastings had failed to get courses in Persian instituted at Oxford, supported though he was in the project by Samuel Johnson.⁸ But when he returned to India to establish a record of misrule that was to call down the wrath of Edmund Burke, among others, upon him, the future of Persian studies in England became assured. In the impeachment trial, Burke gave to many their first lesson in the role of Persian culture in Indian life. The Persian language was then, and until 1834, the medium of official correspondence in India. Burke dramatized the need in that land for a British leadership that was informed in its social and linguistic usages. He himself learned one useful pair of Persian words: *peshcush* and *reshwat*, which he correctly defined as "legitimate present" and "bribe," respectively—a distinction so critical in the case against Hastings.⁹

During the last years of the century, Persian was hurriedly cultivated by Englishmen both at home and in India, where in 1781 Sir Charles Wilkins had devised fonts for printing the manuscript Persian characters. From presses at both centers of activity there issued a considerable

⁶ *The Works of Gray*, ed. Mathias (London, 1814), II, 184, note.

⁷ Lord Teignmouth, "Life of Sir William Jones," *Works of Sir William Jones* (London, 1807), Vols. I and II.

⁸ James Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson* (New York, 1833), II, 281.

⁹ *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (Boston, 1877), X, 171, XI, 376. On the importance of Persian see the *Institutes of Timour*, tr. Major Davy, ed. Joseph White (Oxford, 1783), Appendix.

number of linguistic books as well as editions and translations of the Persian classics. Schools were set up in India for the training of civil servants, and a Royal Asiatic Society was established at Bengal for the promotion of the arts and sciences of Asia.¹⁰ All this cultural stirring, promoted by the interest in trade and empire, produced considerable curiosity about Persian poetry, and a kind of vogue for it developed which was to become in time one of the distinguishing characteristics of English romanticism.

In this article, I shall describe the reception which Sir William Jones's discoveries in Persian poetry had, discuss and illustrate the philosophy of translation that was applied to them, and detail some of the echoes of that poetry in both the minor and major English writers of the Romantic Age.

What must be traced here is the process by which an Orientalism predominantly ethical in its interests, as befitted a deistic age, became the fundamentally aesthetic Orientalism of a Byron or a Delacroix. Since the age under survey was transitional, it is not surprising that a certain ambivalence should characterize its attitude towards the literature of the Orient. It began by responding to the didactic elements in that literature and ended by appreciating the affective. Its original interest in Oriental literature as an index to the study of man so widened the intellectual horizon of the age as to alter ultimately its world view. Thus Oriental literature in England on the one hand felt the effects of the age which discovered it and on the other helped to transform that age.

The age of Sir William Jones was also the age of Dr. Samuel Johnson. It was Johnson who wrote to his friend Warren Hastings, then in India:

I shall hope that he who once intended to increase the learning of his country by the introduction of the Persian language will examine nicely the traditions and histories of the East; that he will survey the wonders of its ancient edifices, and trace the vestiges of its ruined cities; and that, at his return, we shall know the arts and opinions of a race of men from whom little has been hitherto derived.¹¹

Renaissance explorers and historians of the Enlightenment had already made their contributions to the liberation of the English mind from its insularity. The letters of imaginary Chinese and Persian visitors to Europe were even then playing their useful part. There remained only the cultivation of the actual literature of the Persians, Turks, Arabs, and Indians. It was quite fitting, therefore, that the credo of the Enlighten-

¹⁰ See Arthur J. Arberry, *British Contributions to Persian Studies* (London, 1942), and Edward Edwards, *A Catalogue of Persian Printed Books in the British Museum* (London, 1922). For a detailed recent treatment of Sir William Jones see the Jones anniversary number of the *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London*, XI (1946).

¹¹ Boswell, *Life of Samuel Johnson*, II, 281.

ment should be put into the mouth of Johnson's Oriental Rasselas:

I read all the poets of Persia and Arabia and was able to repeat by memory the volumes that are suspended in the mosque of Mecca... All the appearances of nature I was... careful to study; and every country which I have surveyed has contributed something to my poetical powers...

[The business of the poet is to] trace the changes of the human mind as they are modified by the various institutions and accidental influences of climate and custom... He must divest himself of the prejudices of his age and country. His labor is not yet at an end; he must know many languages and many sciences; and that his style may be worthy of his thoughts, must, by incessant practice, familiarize to himself every delicacy of speech and grace of harmony.¹²

To people of such mind it was apparent that from the Eastern books the prince might learn his duties, the patriot a true love of country, the courtier hatred of corruption, and the Christian the vanity of this world. Surely there was a message both for King George III and for the late ruling house across the Channel in these lines from Sadi, which Sir William Jones said would have been suppressed in Europe a century or two before "for spreading with too strong a glare the light of liberty and reason." (King Nushirvan, famed for his justice, is represented as counseling his son):

Guard thou, my son, the helpless and the poor;
Nor in the chains of thine own indolence
Slumber enervate, while the joys of sense
Engross thee, and thou say'st—"I ask no more."
Wise men the shepherd's slumber will deplore
When the rapacious wolf has leaped the fence—
And ranges through the fold! My son, dispense
Those laws that justice to the wrong'd restore.
The common-weal should be the first pursuit
Of the crown'd warrior; for the royal brows
The people first enwreathed—they are the root,
The king the tree. Aloft he spreads his boughs
Glorious:—but learn, impetuous youth, at length,
Trees from the root alone derive their strength.¹³

And yet, from the very beginning of the Enlightenment's interest in the literature of the non-Christian parts of the world, there had been a resentment on the part of the more conservative against the implied equality of those areas with the civilized and Christian areas of Europe. In contrast to the above adaptation of the lines from Sadi, the first selections in English from his *Gulistan* were disposed of in 1774 as "nothing particularly striking... recommending justice and humanity to princes,

¹² Samuel Johnson, *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia* (n.p., A. L. Burt, n.d.), pp. 210 ff.

¹³ The sonnet by Anna Seward, *Annual Register*, XLI (1799), 461, is based upon Jones's literal translation, *Works*, X, 352.

which, in regions of the East, can never be too much inculcated."¹⁴ In this same spirit the *Critical Review* of 1758 had reprovingly observed:

Of late years some writers of the French nation, partly from an affectation of singularity and partly with a view to depreciate the religion of Christ, have set up the Arabians and the doctrines of Mahomet, as it were in opposition to the people of Europe... They have represented the nations of Arabia as a civilized, polite people who possessed the arts and sciences at a time when Europe was buried in ignorance and barbarity.¹⁵

Others, with no religious bias, based their objections to Oriental literature on aesthetic grounds. They found lack of restraint, apparent carelessness of form, and absence of a sense of propriety difficult to tolerate after a training in the classics. This view, quite fittingly, was best presented by Edward Gibbon in these characteristic sentences in a footnote to *The Decline and Fall*:

Our education in the Greek and Latin schools may have fixed in our minds a standard of exclusive taste; and I am not forward to condemn the literature and judgment of nations of whose languages I am ignorant. Yet I *know* that the classics have much to teach, and I *believe* that the Orientals have much to learn: the temperate dignity of style, the graceful proportions of art, the forms of visible and intellectual beauty, the just delineation of character and passion, the rhetoric of narrative and argument, the regular fabric of epic and dramatic poetry.¹⁶

A more thoroughgoing rejection of the romantic elements in literature can hardly be imagined than this. The charge, of course, throws into relief the chief difficulties that proponents of Oriental literature had to face in presenting it to the English reading public of the late eighteenth century. Critics found the mythical history in Firdausi's epic poem, the *Shahnamah*, beyond even poetic belief. Since the proper study of the eighteenth century was man, one might justifiably find fault with a poem in which

... fictions so romantic, and characters so monstrous as are here introduced in the white giant and his co-adjutors the Dives or demons with horns, tusks and long talons, lead us greatly to doubt, whether amidst such a mass of absurdity, the vestiges of genuine historical truth can ever be successfully explored.¹⁷

But even as this was being written, the standards by which all literature was to be judged were in process of alteration. As one translator of Sadi's *Gulistan* rightly observed, if the ginsns and divs of Persian myth were products of a wild imagination, then what of the fairies and elves of English literature, or indeed the supernatural machinery of Pope's *Rape of the Lock*? As the taste for the romantic in literature grew, the tolerance for the fantastic in Persian poetry increased. The confluence of

¹⁴ "Select Fables..." *Monthly Review*, LI (1774), 485.

¹⁵ *Critical Review*, V (1758), 136.

¹⁶ *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. William Smith (London, 1881), VI, 403, note.

¹⁷ *British Critic*, XIV (1799), 121.

the Gothic and the Oriental in Beckford's *Vathek* was perfectly suited to this new taste, and the popularity of that pseudo-Oriental work went a long way towards establishing the Oriental classics in England. If, after all, *Vathek* could be mistaken for an actual translation from an Asiatic language, why could not genuine Persian works in translation be supposed to be imitations? As a matter of fact, they were. It is hard to say to whose advantage. The new reader merely wanted strong reading fare, and the new Orientalism was providing it.

Here is how a reviewer reacted to Isaac D'Israeli's adaptation of the Persian story of *Laili and Majnun*:

It is the province of genius to search for its favorite objects, the beautiful and the sublime, in new and unbeaten tracks. At a period when the delineation of our own manners would perhaps form no interesting topic for poetry, it seems the reigning passion to gather subjects of description from the bolder features of German character, or from the more luxurious offerings of Eastern imagination.¹⁸

Sir William Jones himself had changed from a typical classical scholar reared in the Augustan tradition to a proponent of the romantic. R. M. Hewitt¹⁹ has pointed out that, in an original composition extant in an earlier and a later draft, Jones reveals the influence first of Pope, then of Milton. His Persian studies bore the imprint of this ambivalence—conceived in a neoclassical spirit but growing into a very monument of romanticism. Jones too was conscious of the exhaustion of old themes, images, and forms in English verse, and he saw in the poetry of the Asiatics the possibility of rejuvenating that dying life. In a passage that forecasts the nineteenth century's exploitation of Oriental subjects he wrote:

... yet I cannot but think that our European poetry has subsisted too long on the perpetual repetition of the same images, and incessant allusions to the same fables ... and if the languages of the Eastern nations were studied in our great seminaries of learning, ... a new and ample field would be opened for speculation; we should have a more extensive insight into the history of the human mind; we should be furnished with a new set of images and similitudes; and a number of excellent compositions would be brought to light, which future scholars might explain and future poets imitate.²⁰

A comparison of this statement with Samuel Johnson's words to Warren Hastings is a measure of the advance of the romantic ideal; Jones's hope was not immediately fulfilled, but the full flowering of romanticism in the next century was to owe much to his researches.

In spite of Jones's consciousness of the novel element in Oriental poetry, it must not be supposed that the adaptations which he and his

¹⁸ *Monthly Review*, XXIX, N.S. (1799), 121.

¹⁹ "Harmonious Jones," *Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association*, XXVIII (Oxford, 1943), 42-59.

²⁰ *Works*, X, 359.

followers made were radical departures from previous standards of poetic art. The dual loyalties of the late eighteenth century, on the contrary, moved the first Orientalists to present the Persian poets in the more or less familiar garb of eighteenth-century poetics. The result was that at first a considerable injustice was done to the genius of two of Persia's three greatest poets, Firdausi and Hafiz. The third, Sadi, escaped with no violent distortion.

Sadi, indeed, had already acquired a reputation with the continental deists in the earlier years of the century. Renaissance scholars had brought him into Europe via Latin translation, and men of the Enlightenment, such as Voltaire and Franklin, had seen in his religious breadth of view, his practical good sense, and his strong ethical tone much to recommend him to their age.

Addison had incorporated one of his apologues from the *Bostan* (Orchard) into an essay in the *Spectator*. It was a tale of how a drop of rain, falling into the vast ocean, bewailed the oblivion that was awaiting it, only to be swallowed by an oyster and become transformed into a pearl of great price.²¹ When Sir William Jones was just beginning his studies in Arabic, and before he had taken up Persian, he read this apologue in the *Spectator*, and then tried his hand at turning it into Arabic. Sometime thereafter, having made the acquaintance of the Persian language, he was delightfully surprised to discover the story in the *Bostan*, whence he proceeded to render it back into English.²²

Sadi, then, presented no difficulties to the neoclassical writers whose task it was to offer the Persian poets to the English reading public of the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Firdausi and Hafiz, however, had first to be classicized. Jones did that immediately: he called Firdausi "the Persian Homer" because his *Shahnamah* (Book of Kings) is an epic poem, and Hafiz he named "the Persian Anacreon" because many of the *ghazals* (odes) in his *Divan* (Collection) are panegyrics and drinking songs. These epithets became standard parts of any accounts of the two poets for well nigh the next hundred years, long after the neoclassical necessity that called them into being had ceased to exist. A typical comment was that of Sir William Ouseley, one of Jones's successors in Oriental studies. "Homer and Anacreon," he wrote, "unequaled as they are, might not blush to have produced the heroic poem of Firdausi, or the lyric odes of Hafiz."²³

The association of Firdausi with Homer is understandable. Persia, as yet not a part of the affairs of the British Empire, still had classical associations in the minds of English readers. Moreover, it had now become

²¹ *The Travels of Sir John Chardin into Persia and the East Indies* (London, 1691) was the source of the tale in *Spectator*, No. 293.

²² This story is told in *Gentleman's Magazine*, XLV (1775), 39.

²³ *Persian Miscellanies* (London, 1795), xxii.

possible to make guesses, however inaccurate, at the ultimate kinship of the Greek and Persian peoples and languages. Jones's sound instinct in these matters led him ultimately to the formulation of the basis for the modern concept of a parent Indo-European tongue. Less expert students of Asiatic languages and literatures foundered badly in these deep waters, lacking the chronological sense that should have enabled them to distinguish the Persia of Cyrus and Xerxes from that of Tamerlane or Mahmoud of Ghazna. So widely read an author as Isaac D'Israeli permitted himself to imagine—even after Gibbon's *Decline*, which showed so much Islamic erudition—that the Persian poets had influenced the ancient Greeks.²⁴ As late as 1829, when it must be presumed that elementary notions of chronology had been arrived at, the editor of the *Shahnamah* regarded the work as of interest because of its "record of the history, laws, religion, customs and manners of the ancient Persians (a nation so connected with sacred history and classical associations)."²⁵

The connection of Firdausi with Homer meant for the eighteenth century also a connection with Pope. Consequently, one of the first English translations of Firdausi, by Joseph Champion, was hardly more than a parody of Pope's neoclassical Homer. In his dedicatory verses Champion described his purpose as

Pleas'd if the imitative line should give,
In British verse Firdausi's song to live...
Strengthen my feeble pinions from thy throne!
To bear thy wonders to the frigid zone,
To lead thee to a world that knows thy name,
Though still unconscious of thy soaring fame...
Does Hector or Achilles rage in fight?
A Rustem equals with undaunted might!

That the governing influence in Champion's verses was neither Firdausi nor Homer but Pope is apparent from what he wrote elsewhere:

Poets unknown but on the Persian plains,
Shall live again adorned by English strains;
The pride of Greece in Pope's resounding page
Immortal towers and gains new strength from age.²⁶

Hafiz, no less than Firdausi, was at first deprived of his nationality by the neoclassical adapters. John Nott, one of his first translators, was so struck with the similarity between Hafiz and Anacreon that he was actually uncertain who had influenced whom.²⁷ Of course, the surest

²⁴ *Romances*, 2nd ed. (London, 1801), p. 131, note.

²⁵ Firdausi, *Shahnamah*, ed. Turner Macan (Calcutta, 1829), 4 vols., Introductory Remarks.

²⁶ *The Poems of Ferdosi* (London, 1788), Dedication, pp. vii, x, xii; and *Essays Characteristic of the Persian Poetry* (Calcutta, 1790), p. 7.

²⁷ *Select Odes from the Persian Poet Hafiz* (London, 1787), p. ix.

way to find an audience for the new poet was to compare him with an old Greek favorite and to clothe him in the familiar dress of neoclassical poetry. Champion's lines on Hafiz and two other Persian lyrists illustrate both of these tendencies:

The lofty ode see fam'd Khakani sing
While wine and beauty give eternal spring.
The bard of fancy, Anwari appears,
Crown'd with the laurel blooming in his years.
Khakani, Anwari and Hafiz shine,
The gay Anacreons of the sportive line.²⁸

This was the kind of lyricism that the age found acceptable. Hafiz was a gay and charming poet who celebrated love, wine, and the spring. The profundities discovered in him later by the German philosopher Hegel or by the late nineteenth-century English skeptics eluded the neoclassical translator almost completely.

The next generation was less bound to Pope, even if it revered Homer no less. Stephen Weston, who tried his hand at a few excerpts from the *Shahnamah* in 1815, preferred a "version something between Pope and Cowper." Champion's version, he thought, "leaves the English reader . . . unconvinced of the transcendent powers of the Persian poet." It even occurred to Weston that Firdausi's poem had better be compared with something of its kind in Asiatic literature—the Indian epic *Ramayana*, for instance—than with the *Iliad*.²⁹ James Atkinson, another later translator of the *Shahnamah*, preferred a comparison with the European poems of chivalry, and erroneously imagined that the latter were derived from Persian romances that had seeped into Europe by way of the Moors in Spain.³⁰ But these were the views of an age already calling itself romantic.

It is very much to be doubted whether translators of this age would have been concerned at all with literal renditions of the Persian poets if they had not been so anxious to make their books useful to students of the language. It is quite clear that the freer translations—variously called versions, adaptations, or imitations—were the only ones to which any literary value was attached. These might be in Greek, Latin, French, or English, as those of Sir William Jones were. So long as they were versified, they were literature; if not, they were mere exercises. Jones speaks at one point of "near 300 [odes of Hafiz] that I have paraphrased," manifestly referring to literal prose versions, most of which

²⁸ *Essays Characteristic of the Persian Poetry*, p. 14.

²⁹ *Episodes from the Shah-namah* (London, 1815), pp. 15, 19.

³⁰ *Soohrab, a Poem from the Persian of Firdousee*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta, 1828). Preface.

have never come to light, undoubtedly because they were thought to contain no literary value.³¹

This philosophy of translation had guided Lady Mary Wortley Montagu in her rendition of some verses from the Turkish early in the eighteenth century. She had sent Pope a literal translation of an entire poem by the reigning favorite, but accompanied it by a versification to show its possibilities as poetry. Thus the opening couplet: "The Nightingale now wanders in the vines: Her passion is to seek roses . . ." became in the poetic version:

Now Philomel renews her tender strain,
Indulging all the night her pleasing pain.³²

The difference between these two forms may be taken as typical of the extent to which all eighteenth-century versifiers departed from their originals.

It had occurred to Lady Mary that Islamic poetry bore some resemblance to the Biblical. The same thought must certainly have occurred to later translators from the Persian; but before the advent of the higher criticism there was apparently no disposition to allow a plain and simple rendition to stand on such merits. The following passage from one of John Hindley's literal renderings of Hafiz is a good example:

Yes, thy whole shape is delicately proportioned,
every place about thee is exquisite:
My heart is exhilarated with thy sweet and honied
blandishments.
Like the fresh leaf of the rose, thy nature is
gentleness:
Like the Cypress of the Garden of Paradise, thou art
everywhere charming.
Thy coquettish arts and feigned disdain are sweet;
the down and mole of thy cheek are agreeable:
Thy eyes and eyebrows are languishly brilliant; thy
height and stature are lovely.
The bower of my ideas is filled by thee with
pictures and ornaments:
The odour of my heart becomes fragrant from thy
jasmine-scented locks.

This version was relegated by Hindley to a secondary position in his book, and the following "poetic" version, with superimposed meter and transformed diction, was placed in the position of honor:

Yes, thy form, my fair nymph, is of elegant mould,
And proportion'd with exquisite grace;
How transporting thy shape, and thy looks to behold,
As sly wantons young Love in thy face.

³¹ *Works*, V, 312.

³² *The Letters and Works of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, ed. Lord Wharncliffe (London, 1887), I, 180-182.

Like the bloom of the rose, when fresh pluck'd
 and full blown,
 Sweetly soft is thy nature and air:
 Like the beautiful Cypress in Paradise grown,
 Thou art ever'y way charming and fair.
 Thy arts so coquettish, thy feigned disdain,
 The soft down and sweet mole of thy cheek,
 Eyes, eye-brows, and stature my senses enchain,
 While I gaze, not one word can I speak.
 When my mind dwells on thee, what a lustre assume
 All the objects which fancy presents!
 On my memory thy locks leave a grateful perfume,
 Far more fragrant than jasmine's sweet scents.³³

The most famous of all English translations from the Persian, with the single exception of Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat*, is Sir William Jones's rendition of the eighth *ghazal* of Hafiz, generally called "A Persian Song." The original consists of nine couplets, each of which Jones expanded into a six-line stanza. It will be sufficient here to cite only the first and last couplets and their corresponding stanzas as evidence of the transformation wrought by the translator:

If that Shiraz Turk would take my heart in hand,
 For his (or her) black mole I would give Samarcand
 and Bokhara . . .

An ode thou hast sung and pearls thou hast strung;
 come and sweetly sing, Hafiz,
 For upon thy verses the heavens have bestowed the
 circlet of the Pleiades.

Sweet maid, if thou wouldst charm my sight
 And bid these arms thy neck enfold;
 That rosy cheek, and lily hand,
 Would give thy poet more delight
 Than all Bocara's vaunted gold,
 Than all the gems of Samarcand . . .

Go boldly forth, my simple lay,
 Whose accents flow with artless ease,
 Like orient pearls at random strung;
 Thy notes are sweet, the damsels say,
 But oh, far sweeter, if they please
 The nymph for whom these notes are sung.³⁴

Credit must go to Jones, of course, for making a poem out of what would be merely a translation of a poem. But at what cost! Apart from the obvious liberties taken, it should be noted that the ascription of a feminine

³³ *Persian Lyrics or Scattered Poems from the Diwan-i-Hafiz* (London, 1800), pp. 73-74, 97.

³⁴ Jones, *Works*, X, 251. For a defense of Jones's translation see A. J. Arberry "Orient Pearls at Random Strung," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, XI (1946), 699.

gender to the Shiraz Turk is wholly unjustified by the original. The Persian pronoun being the same for both genders, one must rely upon the weight of evidence external to the poem to determine whether it is addressed to a boy or a girl. Most opinion favors the former. But Jones should be heard in defense of the other liberties he assumed:

The reader will excuse the singularity of the measure which I have used, if he considers the difficulty of bringing so many Eastern proper names into our stanzas. I have endeavoured, so far as I was able, to give my translation the easy turn of the original; and I have, as nearly as possible, imitated the cadence and accent of the Persian measure...³⁵

There is nothing here about the departure from the dictional idioms and figurative language of the original. Such departures were not regarded by the age as requiring any apology. Indeed, Jones felt constrained to apologize elsewhere for the retention of the original imagery in the Persian poem *Laila Majnun*, which he had edited and now wished to see translated:

...I would recommend a version in modulated but unaffected prose, in preference to rhymed couplets; and though not a single image or thought should be added by the Translator, yet it should be allowed to omit several conceits, which would appear unbecoming in an English dress; for the poem with all its beauties has conceits in it, like the black spots on some very beautiful flowers; but they are neither so numerous, nor so unpleasing, as those in the poem of Venus and Adonis; and we cannot with justice show less indulgence to a Poet of Iran, than we all show to our immortal countryman Shakespeare.³⁶

This matter of diction, of course, was the crux of the problem. It was against Oriental diction that the taste of the age rebelled. The first editor of Firdausi felt that the *Shahnamah* would be popular with English readers precisely because, "amidst all the vices of a Persian taste," it had such a simple style, such common sense, and such grandeur of ideas.³⁷ Similarly, an early translator wrote: "The general character of Persian verse is well known to be excess of ornament and inflation of style, but the language of Firdousee combines a great portion of the energy and grace of Western poetry."³⁸ The question, however, was what to do with the bizarre imagery of Persian poetry when it was there.

The earlier reviewers were mainly for throwing it out: "Who indeed that is used to the descriptions of the Greek poetry will ever bear with a Cupid with a bow of sugar canes etc." ³⁹ Jonathan Scott, translator of the Persian tales of Inatullah, was willing to eliminate "that redundancy of expression which we justly avoid as a blemish [but which] is by Ori-

³⁵ *Ibid.*, V, 316.

³⁶ Quoted by Hindley, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

³⁷ *Shah-Namu, Being a Series of Heroic Poems on the Ancient History of Persia*, ed. M. Lumsden (Calcutta, 1811), I, Advt.

³⁸ Atkinson, *op. cit.*, Preface.

³⁹ *New Review*, VI (1784), 361.

ental writers introduced as a beauty . . .⁴⁰ The more devoted students of Persian poetry, however, doggedly held out for the genuine article. James Ross, who made a translation of the *Gulistan* in 1823, felt that the resistance to the imagery of Persian poetry was due to the reader's ignorance of its character. To call the beloved a "moon-face" was not so silly as it seemed, he explained, since the figure was not intended to describe her symmetrical features, but rather her silver whiteness and her virgin purity.⁴¹ Stephen Weston was opposed to circumventing foreign idioms, the poetry being thus "all evaporated." For instance, a Persian distich reads that such and such a person, "withdrawn from his fortune [i.e., deserted by his good luck], by the hand of a slave was withdrawn from life." Weston complained that to translate this, "afflicted by fortune, was killed by the hand of a slave," would be to destroy the mechanism of the distich.⁴² In other words, the pun, upon which the whole effect of the verse turns, would be lost.

A proper adherence to the diction and imagery of the Persian originals would of course have gone a long way towards retaining the spirit of the exotic poetry that was being presented to the English reading public in these first translations. Retention of the rhyme scheme of the *ghazal* was undoubtedly too much to expect; particularly in view of the difficulty that the form has always presented to translators. Yet it should be noted that Sir William Jones quite successfully imitated that form, while at the same time staying close to the quantitative measures of Persian poetry, in an ode of Jami's. Several verses of this poem will be sufficient to show how Jones managed to preserve the double character of the line, the refrain in the first two lines and in each of the fourth, sixth, eighth, etc., immediately following the rhyme word (in italics), and the weaving in of the poet's name in the closing couplet:

How sweet the gale of morning breathes!
 Sweet news of my *delight* he brings;
 News, that the rose will soon approach
 the tuneful bird of *night* he brings.
 Soon will a thousand parted souls
 be led, his captives, through the sky,
 Since tidings, which in every heart
 must ardent flames *excite*, he brings...
 A roving stranger in thy town
 no guidance can sad Jami find,
 Till this his name, and rambling lay,
 to thine all-piercing *sight* he brings.⁴³

⁴⁰ *Bahar-Danush or Garden of Knowledge, an Oriental Romance Translated from the Persic of Einaut Oolah* (London, 1799), p. iii.

⁴¹ "Persian Anthology," *Asiatic Journal*, VIII (1819), 433-434.

⁴² *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁴³ *The British Poets* (Chiswick, 1822), LXXIV, 100.

There were few if any other such translations of Persian poetry—not only in Jones's day but for a great many years thereafter. Edward Fitzgerald's great success with the *Rubaiyat* of Omar Khayyam was largely due, as he himself knew, to the fact that he had retained the music of his original. The eighteenth-century discoverers of Persian poetry, however, were too preoccupied with its startling content to care much about its form.

The poets and poetasters of the eighteenth century pretty generally had no linguistic competency in Persian, and such adaptations as they made of Persian poetry showed only a superficial employment of its characteristic elements.⁴⁴ As a matter of fact, no major talent before Tennyson was to have direct contact with that poetry, and none before Landor and Southey with the Englished form of it.

The *gul u bulbul*, or rose and nightingale legend, was indeed more than sufficiently exploited in the minor poetry of the period. It is of course a staple of Persian poetry and of the Islamic in general. Having come into English literature, as we have seen above, through a translation from the Turkish by Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, it was revived in full force by the school of Sir William Jones later in the century. Thereafter, it was more or less constantly before the English reading public until it acquired the status of the very parody of Near Eastern verse. Byron treated it tenderly; Fitzgerald, though he contemned it, gave to it its widest circulation in some nicely turned rubaiyat; and Oscar Wilde wrote a fairy tale about it in his most poetic prose. In all of these adaptations, the essential theme of the unrequited love of the nightingale for the rose was retained.

The most important eighteenth-century treatment of the legend, however, broke the illusion and provided a happy ending for the story. The infidel was Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of the naturalist, and the work, his *Loves of the Plants*, that unimaginative but highly fanciful combination of biology and poetry. The following passage from this poem depicts in painful detail the frightful product of the consummation of the bird's love for the flower:

So when the nightingale in eastern bowers
On quivering pinion woos the queen of flowers;
Inhales her fragrance as he hangs in air,
And melts with melody the blushing fair;
Half-rose, half-bird, a beauteous monster springs,
Waves his thin leaves and clasps his glossy wings;
Long horrent horns his mossy legs surround,
And tendril talons root him to the ground;

⁴⁴ The best orientation in this field is Edna Osborne's monograph (see p. 137).

Green films of rind his wrinkled neck o'erspread,
 And crimson petals crest his curled head;
 Soft warbling beaks in each bright blossom move,
 And vocal rosebuds thrill the enchanted grove!⁴⁵

A wider acquaintance with and a deeper understanding of the materials of Persian poetry was revealed by Isaac D'Israeli in his retelling of the story of the crazed love of Majnun for Laili, a tale which several of the Persian poets had narrated. Being familiar with the work of Jones, Ouseley, Nott, and other Orientalists, D'Israeli was able to draw upon his sources for the "local descriptions," on which he "employed great attention . . . for they were susceptible of some novelty." From translations of Hafiz and Sadi he took specific images and allusions, quoting Hafiz on Zuleikha's passion for Joseph and paraphrasing Sadi's apologue on the influence of associates. He worked into his prose tale an ode of Jami's, and in his notes paraphrased one of the Persian poems on the subject of his romance. D'Israeli confessed that "from my narrative the reader can form no idea of the Persian poems," for he had merely appropriated "fragments of Persian poetry" and woven them into the fabric of his tale.⁴⁶ Still, the story had enough of a success to become the basis for an opera by Isaac Brandon, *Kais or Love in the Deserts*, which Charles Lamb enjoyed seeing in 1808.⁴⁷

Sir William Jones himself had a considerable talent in poetry, but, as his genius was in language, he may not be judged as an imitator of Persian poetry or as one influenced by it in the writing of English poetry. His various translations, although extremely graceful as English verses, will have to stand finally as translations. The lovely little quatrain attributed to him and still surviving in the *Oxford Book of English Verse* is in reality a translation from the Persian:

On parent knees, a naked new-born child,
 Weeping thou sat'st while all around thee smiled:
 So live, that sinking to thy life's last sleep,
 Calm thou may'st smile, whilst all around thee weep.⁴⁸

The fad which Jones's talents chiefly brought into being was exploited by his less happily endowed fellow Orientalists. The considerable body of verse with an Oriental tinge produced by them is so unimportant intrinsically as to deserve only an allusion here. Its producers were disposed to overrate it because of its professional importance to them. It was chiefly occasional verse and celebrated now a Persian poet's tomb,

⁴⁵ *Poetical Works* (London, 1806), II, 218, lines 319 ff.

⁴⁶ *Romances*, 2nd ed. (London, 1801), pp. v-vi, 33, 133, 137-138.

⁴⁷ Noticed by Byron P. Smith, *Islam in English Literature* (Beirut, 1939), p. 195.

⁴⁸ This information is owed to Arthur J. Arberry, who cites *Thraliana*, the *Diary of Mrs. Hester Lynch Thrale*, ed. K. C. Balderston (Oxford, 1942), II, 895.

now his English translator's fame. One poem was characteristically titled: "On the Ingenious Mr. Jones's Elegant Translations and Imitations of Eastern Poetry and His Resolution to Decline Translating the Persian Poets"; another "The Literary Characteristics of the Most Distinguished Members of the Asiatic Society of Bengal"; still another "On the Restoration of Learning in the East." These and similar trifles had the merit mainly of introducing the reading public to the materials of Asiatic poetry and to its chief proponents in England.

But what was merely professional interest for gentlemen in the military and civil service of the Asiatic empire was to become in the new century the interest of all Englishmen. The publication in 1799 and again in 1807 of the collected works of Sir William Jones was at once symbol and source of the new Orientalism. Most of the major writers of the age read Sir William, because in his works were reflected forces that played upon them all. Some of these forces should be briefly discussed before any consideration of the influence of the Asiatic fad upon the work of the romantic poets.

One influence that shaped the Orientalism of the new century was the gradual extension of the knowledge of the Oriental languages. This is apparent even in the interests of the first class of poets. If Wordsworth's clergyman uncle had had his way, the poet would have taken up the study of Oriental languages as "the best field for a person to distinguish himself in as a man of letters."⁴⁹ Perhaps only laziness kept Byron from acquiring Turkish and Persian. The Arabic characters daunted him and he was content to acquire some speaking knowledge of the Turkish, mainly, it seems, curse words. A Persian-speaking German servant stood him in good stead on his grand tour, and the only genuinely Eastern tongue he ever acquired was Armenian.⁵⁰ Shelley actually took up the study of Arabic in 1821, but his poem "From the Arabic" is more than likely an imitation of the translations of Jones. Nevertheless, with its combination of rhyme and refrain, it closely approximates the *ghazal* form in its opening lines:

My faint spirit was sitting in the light
Of thy looks, my love;
It panted for thee like the hind at noon
For the brooks, my love.⁵¹

As for the general interest in Persian, the numerous editions of Jones's

⁴⁹ George M. Harper, *William Wordsworth, His Life, Works, and Influence* (New York, 1916), I, 122-123.

⁵⁰ *Letters and Journals of Byron*, ed. Prothero, IV, 9-10, note.

⁵¹ *The Letters of P. B. Shelley*, ed. Roger Ingpen (London, 1914), II, 827. R. M. Hewitt (*op. cit.*, p. 53) has pointed out that there is a further use of a *ghazal* device (probably accidental) in the poet's weaving in of his name at the end of a poem otherwise not oriental:

"Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind Than calm in waters seen."

Persian Grammar during this period are sufficient testimony to its extent.

Another factor tending to bring the literature of the East within the orbit of English interests was the increased importance of India in English social, political, and economic life. There is hardly a prominent figure among the romantic writers who does not in one way or another show the conditioning influence of the Indian empire. Those who did not plan to migrate to the American continent considered, it seems, a passage to India. Coleridge once hoped for a cadetship in the East India service. What might have been the consequences to his literary work had it materialized, we can only conjecture from his sympathetic treatment of an Eastern theme in "Kubla Khan."⁵² Shelley wanted to escape to India, of which he had heard "wonderful and interesting things" from his friend and fellow-student in Arabic, Thomas Medwin, the author in 1821 of a volume called *Sketches in Hindostan and Other Poems*. Another friend, Edward Williams, had been in India as a soldier, and of course Thomas L. Peacock was an official in the East India Company. Shelley, it appears, had asked Peacock whether he could use the agencies of the company to go to India, where he hoped to lead an active life in the employ of an Indian prince.⁵³ Even John Keats, in a desperate moment in 1819, considered enlisting on an Indiaman as a ship's surgeon.⁵⁴

Furthermore, Persia itself, as distinguished from the larger Asiatic land which had adopted Persian literature, was brought closer to Englishmen in the new era. Napoleonic ambitions in the East sent an English mission to the Persian Shah in 1810. Sir Gore Ouseley, the ambassador in charge, was destined to live long enough in Persia to become ultimately an ambassador of its culture to his fellow countrymen. His daughter was named Shirin for a heroine of Persian romance, and on his own deathbed he was overheard praying in the Persian language.⁵⁵ Of greater literary importance, however, was the fact that Sir Gore's secretary was James Morier, who was to popularize the lighter side of Persian life and character in his delightful Hajji Baba stories, one of

⁵² E. K. Chambers, *Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford, 1938), p. 12; *The Unpublished Letters of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Earl L. Griggs (London, 1932), contain an interesting letter from Coleridge to Southey regarding the latter's *Thalaba* which shows that Coleridge might after all have had difficulty suspending his disbelief in Islamic mythology. He suggested that Southey substitute "Allah" for "God" in a number of passages because "It might give a not altogether unfounded offence that a name so connected with awful realities is (so often and so solemnly) blended with those bold fictions which ask and gain only a transient Faith." (I, 126).

⁵³ Edmund Blunden, *Shelley, a Life Story* (New York, 1947), pp. 286-295, 318.

⁵⁴ Claude I. Finney, *The Evolution of Keats' Poetry* (Cambridge, Mass., 1936), II, 649.

⁵⁵ James Reynolds, "Memoir," in Sir Gore Ouseley's *Biographical Notices of the Persian Poets* (London, 1846).

which added to its other attractions a graceful translation of an ode of Hafiz.

Lastly, and in consequence of all the foregoing, there was produced in England a popular periodical and travel literature specializing in Orientalia that was to bring to the general reader information that might otherwise escape him. The more scholarly works of the first Orientalists, whether in India or at home, gave way in the new generation to such periodicals as the *Asiatic Annual Register* and the *Asiatic Journal*, which carried Asiatic intelligence of all sorts throughout practically the first half of the nineteenth century. These publications, along with the texts and translations of Oriental works which continued to appear, produced a crop of reviews in the magazines that reached the largest possible number of readers.

Out of this milieu came the Orientalized productions of the major romantic poets. There was something frankly exploitative about the way these writers made use of the materials of Asiatic literature, something curiously analogous to the political relations between England and her Eastern empire. The riches of Oriental expression were recklessly rifled, much that was good was thrown away, and much that was trivial was overvalued. The treasures were gaudily displayed and frequently gilded with the colors of false imagination instead of being shown in the light of truth. It would be a long time before such distortions of Asiatic literature would be set straight. The more sober-minded Victorians had to unsettle many prejudices before they could present the Persian poets in more true colors.

It is doubtful whether any of the romantic poets who dabbled in Orientalia had a genuine sympathy with the materials they handled. Even Byron's fellow feeling for the people of the East was subject to quick cancellation. Certainly both Southey and Landor were contemptuous of the literature of Asia. Southey was apparently unfitted by temperament to appreciate the Asiatics; he thought that "the little of their literature that has reached us is equally worthless" with their decorative art.⁵⁶ A figure of speech here, an allusion there, and a footnote in another place exhausted his legitimate use of Oriental materials, and Byron could justly accuse him of having adopted only the most outrageous fictions of the Easterns in his "unsaleables," *Thalaba* and *The Curse of Kehama*. But it was these exaggerations that stuck in the popular mind, leading one American reviewer to say that Southey's treatment of Persian mythology was superior to Firdausi's.

Even as Southey was putting *Thalaba* together there appeared a volume of *Poems from the Arabic and Persian* "by the author of *Gebir*." Southey greeted it with: "I see the author of *Gebir* has been translating

⁵⁶ *Poetical Works* (Boston, 1880), IV, 37, 238.

from Arabic and Persian. Can there possibly be Arabic and Persian poetry which the author of *Gebir* may be excused from [i.e., for] translating?"⁸⁷ The author of *Gebir* himself thought even less of Asiatic poetry, that "high-seasoned garbage of barbarians."⁸⁸ Except a few things in Hafiz, he questioned whether there was "anything else positively good in the whole range of Eastern poetry, except the Jewish."

The fact is that the volume of poems, which dropped dead from the press in 1800 and hardly sold a copy, had been undertaken in a spirit of derision. Having one day depreciated the Orientals, Landor was challenged by a friend to write in their manner. He had formed some acquaintance with French versions of Islamic poetry, and was familiar with John Nott's English translation of some odes of Hafiz. The volume purports to be a translation of a French version, but is in fact sheer parody. Although conscious that in the Oriental ode the poet weaves his name into the closing lines, Landor deliberately avoided this device and then mischievously commented that perhaps the poems were not odes—or even not genuine. John Nott, his Hafiz translator, might not have been certain whether the Persians imitated the Greeks or vice versa, but Landor, with his classical tastes, would not for a moment consider diminishing the ancients by tracing their work to the East.

Thomas Moore was a more conscientious researcher and a better adapter of Oriental diction and theme to English verse. The bibliography for *Lallah Rookh* practically parallels a list of the books published in Moore's day dealing with the Orient.⁸⁹ That poem has, probably correctly, been regarded as the example par excellence of the pseudo-Oriental poem in English literature. The sentiments, as has often been noted, are genuinely Irish, and the Persian element shows up rarely. There are the usual allusions to typical Persian themes, such as the love of Zuleikha for Joseph:

Here fond Zuleikha woos with open arms
The Hebrew boy, who flies from her young charms,
Yet, flying, turns to gaze, and, half undone,
Wishes that Heav'n and she could both be won.

(Lines 371-374)

This might have been inspired by many a passage in Hafiz, with whom Moore was acquainted through Nott's translation.

It is difficult to conceive, however, that the "Bendemeer" song from *Lallah Rookh* could have been mistaken for a translation from the Persian. Moore indeed reported in his *Memoirs* that the nephew of the Per-

⁸⁷ John Forster, *Walter Savage Landor* (London, 1869), I, 153.

⁸⁸ *Poems from the Arabic and Persian*, facsimile reprint (London and Glasgow, 1927), Preface.

⁸⁹ Oscar Thiergen, *Byrons und Moores orientalische Gedichte: Eine Parallel* (Leipzig, 1880), pp. 10-12.

sian ambassador told him his song was being sung by Persians in the belief that it was native to their tongue. It was this report which gave rise to the verses of Henry Luttrell:

I'm told, dear Moore, your lays are sung,
(Can it be true, you lucky man?)
By moonlight in the Persian tongue,
Along the streets of Ispahan.⁶⁰

If, as it appears, the song was translated into Persian, it is easy to imagine that the Persian translator took the same liberties with his original that Englishmen had taken with the verses of Hafiz. In the following passage, indeed, only the sentimental nostalgia of the third line might betray the poem's origin; the rest, in diction at least, is not very unlike much Persian poetry.

There's a bower of roses by Bendemeer's stream,
And the nightingale sings round it all the day long;
In the time of my childhood 'twas like a sweet dream,
To sit in the roses and hear the birds sing.

As a whole, however, both song and poem are a tour de force in which a lot of superficial learning about the materials of Asiatic literature is paraded without any successful penetration to the heart of its mystery.

Byron was a less industrious student of Oriental literature but had the advantage of firsthand contact with the East.⁶¹ Before his travels to the Levant, however, he had received the well-read man's orientation to the literature of the East through the several media discussed above. The reference to the Persian poets, particularly Hafiz, in *English Bards* probably came from Edward Scott-Waring's very popular *A Tour to Sheeraz*, in which the names are spelled as Byron spells them. There is a further note on Hafiz which Byron penned in connection with his early readings in foreign literature; Moore reports it thus: "Hafiz, the immortal Hafiz, the oriental Anacreon . . . who . . . is revered beyond any bard of ancient or modern times by the Persians, who resort to his tomb near Shiraz, to celebrate his memory. A splendid copy of his work is chained to his monument."⁶² In all probability Byron was here paraphrasing William Francklin's entry on Hafiz in his *Observations Made on a Tour from Bengal to Persia, 1886-87*: "[Hafiz] is

⁶⁰ Moore, *Memoirs, Journal and Correspondence*, ed. Lord John Russell (London, 1853), III, 167, and xxix.

⁶¹ Wiener's thorough account of the sources of Byron's "Turkish Tales" (see note 5 above) makes it unnecessary for me to be detailed about Byron's Orientalism. Wiener has, however, slightly underestimated the influence of the Persian poets in Byron's time—slight as that influence really is. For instance, he knows of no translator of Hafiz besides Jones and Nott before 1807; actually there were at least three others, Samuel Rousseau, John Richardson, and John Hindley. In all other respects I quite agree with his conclusions.

⁶² Byron, *Life, Letters and Journals*, ed. Moore (London, 1892), p. 48.

held in greater esteem with them than any of their poets and they venerate him almost to adoration . . . making plentiful libations of the delicious wine of Shiraz to his memory."⁶³ The likelihood is of course that he was introduced to the Persian poets by Sir William Jones, whose life by Lord Teignmouth he read in his early youth. In fact, there is attributed to Byron's pen a parody of Jones's famous "A Persian Song of Hafiz" under the title of "The Barmaid."⁶⁴ Like Jones and his school, Byron couples Hafiz with Anacreon, as in the following lines on love in *Childe Harold*:

Love conquers age—so Hafiz hath averred:
So sings the Teian and he sings in sooth.

(Canto II, lxxiii)

The success of *The Giaour*, in which Byron's readings in Asiatic literature were authenticated by his direct observation of Islamic life, led him to set about deliberate Orientalizing. He wrote to Moore: "The little I have done in this way is merely a 'voice in the wilderness' for you; and if it has had any success that also will prove that the public are orientalizing, and pave the path for you." Thus the two poets worked together, often in a spirit of freemasonry aimed at excluding a rival like Henry Knight. Moore, having read more widely in the Eastern books that were available in English and French, was able to tell Byron, with the aid of a Persian-English dictionary, that the word *Giamshid*, which Byron had used in *The Giaour*, was disyllabic. Byron was not even sure of the name of Firdausi's epic, but he ventured to suggest that Moore write a *Shah-Namah*, that is to say, a poem of poems, and not merely gazelles (so he spelled the word) or lyrics. In turn, Byron put a Turkish history book into Moore's hands and suggested to him the theme of the amours of a peri and a mortal—but coincidentally Moore was already at work on such a poem. So far as local color was concerned, Byron, to be sure, was on firmer ground. He had been called upon to costume an Oriental melodrama named *Nourjahad*, which was thereafter mistakenly attributed to him though he yawned throughout an entire performance of it.⁶⁵

The Giaour had fooled the *Edinburgh Review*. Jeffrey wrote: "The Turkish original of the tale is attested to all but the bolder skeptics of literature by the great variety of untranslated words."⁶⁶ Jeffrey must have had in mind "kiosk," "muezzin," "palampore," and "ataghan." Such words Byron would have encountered on his Eastern voyage. His

⁶³ London, 1861, p. 246.

⁶⁴ It is mentioned by Prothero, *Letters and Journals*, II, 27, note; but the present John Murray does not know of the poem's whereabouts.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, II, 253 ff., 288.

⁶⁶ *Edinburgh Review*, XXI (1813), 308.

literary knowledge was slow in acquisition, however. In *The Giaour*, the *gul* and the *bulbul* are still "rose" and "nightingale":

For there the Rose, o'er crag or vale,
Sultana of the Nightingale,
The maid for whom his melody,
His thousand songs are heard on high,
Blossoms blushing to her lover's tale...

(Lines 21-25)

A note explains: "The attachment of the nightingale to the rose is a well known Persian fable. If I mistake not, the 'Bulbul of a thousand tales' is one of his appellations." The information probably came from Beckford's *Vathek*.

In *The Bride of Abydos*, however, the two lovers are called by their Persian names. The famous opening passage about the land of "the cypress and the myrtle" tells of "the gardens of Gul" where "the voice of the nightingale never is mute." At the end of the poem, in a passage of unusual beauty, a rose is described to which

... the livelong night there sings
A Bird unseen—but not remote ...
It were the Bulbul.

(Lines 1171 ff.)

In still another line of this poem there is evidence of the deliberate Orientalizing effort—line 72 changed from "with many a tale and mutual song" to "with Majnoun's tale or Sadi's song" as it went from manuscript to type. The accompanying footnote properly identified Majnoun and Laila as the Romeo and Juliet of the East, and Sadi as "the moral poet of Persia." Elsewhere, in line 686, a reference to the Persian tale of Joseph and Zuleika hinted at the source of the name of the heroine of *The Bride*.

Yet in spite of Byron's intentional application of his slight knowledge of Islamic literature to the composition of his "Turkish Tales," in spite even of the vivid local color provided by his own observations in the East, the tales remained fundamentally unlike such genuine Eastern works as *Yussuf and Zuleikha* and *Laila and Majnoun*. One can only attribute the common belief that they were translations of Oriental originals to the still widespread ignorance of the literature of Asia. Even Jeffrey became aware of the difference before long; Byron's poems were "plain and elementary . . . when compared with the lyric compositions . . . of the Orientals." As for the Byronic heroes, they were plainly unreal, for they "combined the desperate, reckless valor of a Buckaneer or Corsair of any age, with the refined gallantry and sentimental generosity of an Englishman of the present day."⁶⁷

⁶⁷ *Edinburgh Review*, XXIII (1814), 204.

Byron's pride kept him cynically detached from the emotions of Eastern literature, and he never entered fully into its spirit. Of Oriental plants he might have had more to say in *Don Juan*,

But that of late your scribblers think it worth
Their while to rear whole hotbeds in *their* works
Because *one* poet traveled 'mongst the Turke.

(Canto III, lxiv)

Those lines from Persian poets which he saw written in beautiful manuscripts remained for him, as they were described in *Don Juan*:

Soft Persian sentences, in lilac letters,
From poets or the moralists their betters.

(Canto V, xlii)

The very fame that came to Byron through his Oriental tales perhaps served to inhibit the poetic productivity of Sir Walter Scott. Whether Scott might otherwise have exploited Asiatic themes is very doubtful; that he would have cared more for accuracy than Byron is equally doubtful. In his poem "The Search for Happiness," Scott mixed such incongruous elements as an Oriental sultan, the city of Rome, and John Bull, and then threw out the challenge: "E'en let the learned search and tell me if I'm wrong."⁶⁸ In his novel *The Talisman*, he was hardly more faithful to detail. There, in the chapter entitled "Ahriman" (the ancient Persian god of darkness), he drew upon Jones and others in concocting a curious potpourri of Islamic and pre-Islamic stories to put into the mouth of Saladin. The Saracen hero is permitted to recite Hafiz's most famous ode, which, however, is attributed to a "Rudpiki" (probably a garbled version of Rudagi, an early Persian bard who, unlike Hafiz, at least came chronologically before Saladin).⁶⁹

To this the Persian poets had been brought by the English romantics! Yet there was no denying that a kind of fad had been established. A critic in the *New Monthly Review* of 1822 could justify his dry etymologizing with Persian words because, as he said, "the reader of taste must recollect that these names have been familiarized by the delicious poem *Lallah Rookh* and by *The Bride of Abydos*."⁷⁰ As late as the middle of the century, the Irish poet Clarence Mangan was to write in the Persian manner because Hafiz sold better than Mangan.⁷¹ In time the imitation would tend to recommend the genuine article. The young Byron of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* had ridiculed one such imitator off the stage—a certain Robert Stott of the Della Cruscan school who

⁶⁸ *Complete Poetical Works* (Boston, 1900), p. 432.

⁶⁹ *Talisman* (Edinburgh, 1871), p. 27.

⁷⁰ *New Monthly Review*, IV (1822), 262.

⁷¹ *Poems of James Clarence Mangan*, ed. D. J. Donoghue (London, 1903), Introduction, p. xliii.

wrote under the pseudonym "Hafiz" for the *Morning Post*. He was baited in the lines about those

... smaller fry who swarm in shoals
From silly Hafiz up to simple Bowles.

In a footnote Byron indignantly remarked:

What would be the sentiments of the Persian Anacreon, Hafiz, could he rise from his splendid sepulchre at Sheeraz (where he reposes with Ferdousi and Sadi, the oriental Homer and Catullus) and behold his name assumed by one Stott of Dromore, the most impudent and execrable of literary poachers for the Daily Prints.⁷²

It was of course typical of the Romantic Age that Byron should make the mistake of transporting the remains of Firdausi to Shiraz. The Oriental scholarship of the school of Sir William Jones had not yet been digested by the popular writers, and so the authentic Oriental touch in English poetry could not yet be achieved. But a taste had begun to be cultivated that in the next age would demand and receive the ripened fruit.

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⁷² *Works*, I, 308, 362.

LA INFLUENCIA ITALIANA EN LA GALATEA DE CERVANTES

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EL RECUERDO que se dedica a los escritores con motivo de los centenarios suele remover la investigación de muchas cuestiones literarias. El año de 1947 fué el cuarto centenario del nacimiento de Miguel de Cervantes, y la bibliografía cervantina creció con las muchas obras que se escribieron entonces. A causa de las dificultades que aun existen para un eficiente servicio de librería, las reseñas de estas obras, como la que ha publicado William L. Fichter,¹ resultan de gran interés como información sobre estos nuevos estudios. Voy a fijar mi atención en un punto que indica el profesor americano. Al enumerar algunas de estas obras escribe: "aun estamos a oscuras en lo que toca a la precisa deuda de Cervantes con la literatura italiana."² Me parece que a este propósito puedo aquí reunir en un sistemático y breve resumen, acondicionado a la índole de esta publicación, algunos de los tributos de esta deuda cervantina. El dominio en estudio es limitado, pues se refiere sólo a la *Galatea*, obra pastoril de Cervantes.³

La estancia de Cervantes en Italia entre los años de 1569 y 1575 ofrece un espacio de tiempo suficiente para las lecturas y experiencias de arte que ayudaron a perfilar la influencia de los italianos en el escritor español. Por otra parte, los años en que escribe Cervantes son en España de madura fructificación de las formas literarias que irrumpieron con aires de novedad con Boscán y Garcilaso para la poesía lírica, y con Montemayor para el relato pastoril, combinado con el novelesco. En la lírica, en el libro de pastores y en la novela existía, pues, una tradición italianizante arraigada en el siglo en curso. Situación personal y precedentes literarios favorecen la presentación del caso de influencias. En este resumen mencionaré sólo algunas de las huellas evidentes de un positivo influjo en la *Galatea*, que es la primera de las obras de Cervan-

¹ "Estudios cervantinos recientes (1937-1947)," *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, II (1948), 88-100.

² Página 92.

³ Proceden estos datos de la lección inaugural del curso 1948-1949 que estuvo a mi cargo en la Universidad de La Laguna de Tenerife (Islas Canarias); el tema fué el estudio crítico de la *Galatea*.

tes que tiene envergadura de libro,⁴ y no trataré de la disposición que pudo dejar este influjo en la creación de Cervantes, tema de más altos vuelos.

Los tratados de amor

Estas codificaciones del Amor, que reúnen la lírica inquieta de Petrarca con la exposición filosófica del platonismo renacentista, fueron un medio de difundir la cultura de los humanistas de la época, y convertirla en materia de trato social. Cervantes leería ávidamente estos libros, cuyas expresiones, ideas y actitudes espirituales haría suyas. El relato pastoril en España, desde Montemayor, tenía entre sus partes intermedios en que los pastores trataban en conversación del amor desde un punto de vista universal. Por este medio se popularizaron en España las teorías del amor. La *Galatea* posee también estos intermedios, y en ellos Cervantes traduce textos tomados de dos autores italianos: Pietro Bembo y Mario Equicola.

De Bembo toma los argumentos contra el amor que en los *Asolanos*⁵ dice Perotino, y que en la *Galatea*⁶ se ponen en labios de Lenio.

BEMBO:

... que porque, discurriendo por las pasiones del ánimo, vernemos a conocer mejor la amargura deste, como cosa que el saca del enue de ellas ... Las pasiones generales del ánimo, señoras, son estas y no mas: de las quales se deriuan todas las otras, y en ellas se tornan: sobrado dessear, demasiado alegrarse, sobrado temor de las miserias venideras y dolor de las presentes; las quales pasiones, por quanto assi como vientos contrarios perturban el ciego del ánimo y todo el reposo de nuestra vida, son llamados de los que scriuen por vocablo mas señalado perturbaciones. Destas

CERVANTES:

Mas, porque se venga con mas facilidad en conocimiento de la amargura que amor encierra, por las passiones del ánimo discurriendo se verá clara la verdad que sigo. Son, pues, las passiones del ánimo, como mejor vosotros sabeys, discretos caualleros y pastores, quatro generales, y no mas: dessear demasiado, alegrarse mucho, gran temor de las futuras miserias, gran dolor de las presentes calamidades; las quales passiones, por ser como vientos contrarios que la tranquilidad del ánima perturban, con mas proprio vocablo, perturbaçiones son llamadas. Y destas perturba-

⁴ *Primera parte de la Galatea* dividida en seys libros compuesta por Miguel de Cervantes ... Impressa en Alcalá por Iuan Gracian. Año de 1585. En Lisboa, 1590, apareció la segunda edición, expurgada por fray Bertholameu Ferreyra, de donde tomó el texto Oudin para su edición de París 1611. Véase Francisco López Estrada, "Cotejo de las ediciones Alcalá 1585 y París 1611 de la 'Galatea' de Cervantes," *Revista Bibliográfica y Documental*, II (1948), 73-90. La segunda parte de la obra no llegó a aparecer impresa, y Cervantes la recuerda aun en los postreros momentos de su vida en la dedicatoria del *Persiles*, 1616.

⁵ Cito el texto por una traducción castellana anterior a la *Galatea*: LOS / ASOLANOS de M. Pe / tro Bembo, Nueuamente / traduzidos de lengua / Toscana en roman / ce castellano. / Dirigidos al Muy Magnifico S. don / Pedro Rodriguez Nieto / de Fonseca [Escudo] / En Salamanca / 1551.

⁶ Cito por la edición de las *Obras completas de Cervantes* de Schevill y Bonilla, 2 tomos (Madrid, 1914).

perturbaciones, puesto que la primera sea propia del amor como aquel que no es otra cosa sino desseo, pero el, no contento con sus terminos, passa en las posesiones ajenas, soplando de tal manera en la antorcha, a todas miserablemente las pone a fuego; el qual, despues consumiendo nuestros animos y dirrriendolos, trae muchas vezes nuestra vida al fin; o si esto no succede, a una vida sin falta peor que muerte nos haze llegar; pues agora por començar del mismo desseo, digo esto ser de todas las otras passiones origen y cabeça; y que deste proceden todos nuestros males, ni mas ni menos que de sus rayzes procede qualquier arbol, porque como quiera que el se enciende de alguna cosa en nosotros, luego nos apremia a seguirla y procurarla; y ansi, siguiendola y buscandola, nos haze incurrir en peligros exorbitantes y desordenados y en mil miserias; este instiga al hermano a procurar los abominables abraços de la mal amada hermana, la madrastra a su antenado. Y algunas vezes, lo que solo dezir aborrezco, al mismo padre, de la tierna hija virgen, cosas mas mostruosas que fieras, de las quales por ser mucho mejor callar que no hablar, dexandolas estar en su no dezidera desconueniencia. Y hablando de nosotros digo ansi: que estos nuestros pensamientos, nuestros passos, nuestras jornadas disponen, diuisan y traen a fines lastimeros y no pensados. Y muchas vezes no aproueche que alguno le contradiga con la razon porque, puesto que no conozcamos yr derechos a nuestro mal, no por esso sabemos detenernos... mas no se contenta amor en terneros con vn solo desseo, casi con vna vara solicitados antes, ansi como del dessear las cosas nascen todas las otras passiones, ansi del primer apetito que sube en nosotros, como de río caudal se deriban, otros nascen antoxos, y estos son en los enamorados no menos diuersos que infinitos, porque no embargante que las mas vezes todos van a parar a vn fin, pero porque todos los obiectos son diuersos, y las fortunas de los ena-

ciones, la primera es propria del amor, pues el amor no es otra cosa que desseo; y assi, es el desseo principio y origen de do todas nuestras passiones proceden, como qualquier arroyo de su fuente, y de aqui viene que todas las vezes que el desseo de alguna cosa se enciende en nuestros coraçones, luego nos mueue a seguirla y a buscarla, y buscandola y siguiendola, a mil desordenados fines nos conduce. Este desseo es aquel que incita al hermano a procurar de la amada hermana los abominables abraços, la madrastra del alnado, y, lo que peor es, el mesmo padre de la propria hija; este desseo es el que nuestros pensamientos a dolorosos peligros acarrea: ni aproueche que le hagamos obstaculo con la razon, que, puesto que nuestro mal claramente conozcamos, no por esso sabemos retirarnos del. Y no se contenta amor de terneros a vna sola voluntad atentos: antes, como del desseo de las cosas, como ya está dicho, todas las passiones nascen, assi, del primer desseo que nasce en nosotros, otros mil se deriuan, y estos son en los enamorados no menos diuersos que infinitos. Y aunque todas las mas de las vezes miren a vn solo fin, con todo esso, como son diuersos los obiectos y diuersa la fortuna de los amadores de cada vno, sin duda alguna, diuersamente se dessea. Ay algunos que, por llegar a alcançar lo que dessean, ponen toda su fuerça en vna carrera, en la qual ¡o quantas y quan duras cosas se encuentran, quantas vezes se cae, y quantas agudas espinas atormentan sus pies, y quantas vezes primero se pierde la fuerça y el aliento, que den alcance a lo que procuran! Algunos otros ay que ya de la cosa amada son poseedores, y ninguna otra dessean ni piensan, sino en mantenerse en aquel estado, y, tiniendo en esto solo ocupados sus pensamientos, y en esto solo todas sus obras y tiempo consumido, en la felicidad son miseros, en la riqueza pobres, y en la ventura desuenturados. Otros, que ya estan fuera de la possession de sus bienes, procuran tornar a ellos, vsando para ello mil

morados tambien diuersas, sin falta cada vno dessea diuersamente. Ay algunos que por alcançar quando quiera su caça, sus fuerças ponen en vna carrera. En la qual, ¡ay dolor! quantas vezes se cae, quantos estropieços malos se encuentran, quantas importunas espinas nos lastiman los fatigados y miserables pies; y muchas vezes acontece que perdemos antes el aliento, que podamos asir la caça. Otros ay que, hechos poseedores de la cosa amada, ninguna otra cosa dessean, sino siempre mantenerse en aquel mismo estado; y en el, teniendo fixo todo su cuydado y solo en esto empleando todas sus obras y su tiempo, en las felicidades son miserables, y en las riquezas, mendigos, y en sus venturas, desuenturados. Otro sera que, desposseydo de sus bienes, procura otra vez de entrar en ellos, y sobre ello con mil condiciones duras, con mil conciertos inicos en ruegos, en lagrimas, en gemidos, derritiendose entre tanto que sobre lo perdido, debate pone su vida locamente en contienda. Pero estas fatigas, estos afanes, estos tormentos no se ven en los primeros desseos, porque assi como en la entrada de algun monte se nos representa el camino harto espedido y claro, mas quanto mas adentro penetramos, tanto el sendero se torna mas angusto, ansi nosotros, comibados primero del appetito a algun obieto, en tanto que nos parece poderle fácilmente alcançar, caminando mas adelante hazia el, de passo en passo, hallamos el camino mas angusto y trabajoso... [Páginas 39 y siguientes.]

ruegos, mil promessas, mil condiciones, infinitas lagrimas, y al cabo, en estas miserias ocupandose, se ponen a terminos de perder la vida. Mas no se ven estos tormentos en la entrada de los primeros desseos, porque entonces el engañoso amor nos muestra vna senda por do entremos, al parecer ancha y espaciosa, la qual despues poco a poco se va cerrando, de manera que, para boluer ni passar adelante, ningun camino se offrece. [Páginas 47 y siguientes, tomo II.]

En los párrafos anteriores Cervantes sigue muy de cerca el original. En otros, sin embargo, lo que predomina es una adaptación del sentido del texto influyente, acomodada al relato.

De Equicola traduce varios párrafos de la *summa* de doctrina del amor que es el *Libro di Natura d'Amore*.⁷ Este es uno de los fundamentales:

Hora prima che piu oltra proceda, mi par di rispondere a quelli che contra amore si adirano, e per loro fulminare, e	Mas yo te demando, ¡o Lenio! tu que has dicho que el amor es causa de ruyna de imperios, destruycion de ciudades, de
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⁷ Cito por la edición: LIBRO / DI NATVRA / D'AMORE di Mario Equicola / di nvovo con somma diligenza ristampato e / corretto da M. Lodouico Dolce... In Vinegia, apresso Gabriel / Giolito de Ferrari et / Fratelli. MDLIII.

con tonitri mouer il cielo gridando amor esser causa de ruine d'imperi, e occisione de genti, molte uirile opere effeminate, di lette li studi, e d'altre uirtu la cura impedire. Volentieri li domandarei qual è si degna e laudabil cosa, l'uso delle qual non si possa in mal conuertere se in arbitrio de imprudenti si ritroua. Dannesi philosophia perche li eccessi e defetti ne mostra, e molti di tale professione sono stati pessimi. Abbrusciamo le sacre scritture, historie, satire e heroici poeti, che con le uirtu li uitiij descriuono e cantano. Vituperasi medicina che li ueneni insegna. Inutile dicamo la eloquentia, che è stata si uerba, che spesso ha posto in dubbio ogni glorioso stato. Non se lauorino arme, perche li ladri e homicidi le usano. Non fabricheмо case, perche possono sopra li habitanti ruinare. Interdicasi la uarietà de cibi, che spesso causano infermità. Niuno cerchi d'hauer figliuoli, percio che Edippo occise l' padre. Da furie l'agitato Horestes della propia matre feri il petto. Il fuoco e l'acqua sono utilissimi elementi, d'annosi e pestiferi seriano da peruersi malamente usati. Così ciascuna cosa buona puo diuentare pessima, e parturire mali effetti essendo in man di temerari, e di quelli che come irrationali senza mediocrità dal appetito solo si lasciano gouernare. Quella emula dell'imperio Romano Carthagine, la bellicosa Numantia la ornata Corintho, superba Thebe, dotta Athene, e città di Dio Hierusalem, furon uinte e debellate. Dicaroni lo eccidio di si nobili città se ad amor si di imputare? [Página 160.]

mueres de amigos, de sacrilegos hechos, inuentor de trayciones, transgressor de leyes, digo que te demando que me digas qual loable cosa ay oy en el mundo por buena que sea, que el vso della no pueda en mal ser conuertida. Condemnese la filosofia, porque muchas vezes nuestros defectos descubre, y muchos philosophos han sido malos; abrasense las obras de los heroycos poetas, porque con sus satiras y versos los vicios reprehenden y vituperan; vituperese la medicina, porque los venenos descubre; llamese inutil la eloquencia, porque algunas vezes ha sido tan arrogante, que ha puesto en duda la verdad conocida; no se forjen armas, porque los ladrones y los homicidas las vsan; no se fabriquen casas, porque puedan caer sobre sus habitadores; prohibanse la variedad de los manjares, porque suelen ser causa de enfermedad; ninguno procure tener hijos, porque Edipo, instigado de cruelissima furia, mató a su padre, y Oreste hirio el pecho de la madre propia; tengase por malo el fuego, porque suele abrasar las casas y consumir las ciudades; desdefiense el agua, porque con ella se anegó toda la tierra; condemnense, en fin, los elementos, porque pueden ser de algunos peruersos peruersamente vsados, y desta manera qualquier cosa buena puede ser en mala conuertida, y proceder della effectos malos, si en las manos de aquellos son puestas que, como irracionales sin mediocridad del apetito gouernar se dexan. Aquella antigua Carthago, émula del imperio romano, la bellicosa Numancia, la adornada Corintho, la soberuia Thebas, la docta Atenas y la ciudad de Dios, Hierusalem, que fueron vencidas y assoladas: digamos por esso que el amor fue causa de su destruycion y ruyna. [Páginas 65 y siguientes, tomo II.]

Conviene indicar, para completar esta noticia, la influencia de León Hebreo, pues Cervantes se refiere expresamente a él en el prólogo del *Quijote* como a un autor que puede leer cualquiera que sepa algo del toscano. En 1585 los *Diálogos* estaban ya traducidos al castellano, pero, a mi juicio, Cervantes enlazaría a León Hebreo con los recuerdos de Italia. De la influencia de este escritor en la *Galatea* se ocuparon Menén-

dez y Pelayo, Américo Castro y Egea Abelenda.⁸ En conjunto resulta una relación más fragmentaria que las anteriores. Cervantes recoge algunas ideas que articula y subordina al curso de su relato: así, por ejemplo, la división del amor en tres maneras, honesto, útil y deleitable, y las relaciones entre la belleza corpórea y la incorpórea. El influjo resulta mucho más difuso que en los otros casos en que Cervantes se ciñe al texto italiano.

El *Cortesano* de Castiglione es otra obra de divulgación del platonismo románico. La traducción de Boscán⁹ españolizó la obra del italiano, que a su vez era concreción de un tipo europeo. Sobre la *Galatea*, no hay influjo, y en el enfrentamiento entre la Corte y la aldea, Cervantes adopta una actitud de compromiso, y reparte las apetencias cortesanas para el personaje novelesco, y las del campo, para el pastor. Ciertos acercamientos en cuanto a la teoría y técnica del amor coinciden con temas de concepción ovidiana.¹⁰

Precedentes pastoriles italianos

Respecto a la influencia de la *Arcadia* los críticos no están de acuerdo.¹¹ Resulta evidente que Sannazaro es un elemento común en el desarrollo de la literatura pastoril del Renacimiento europeo, pero en este caso no aparece clara una influencia directa sobre la *Galatea*. La andadura estilística de la narración pastoril no llega pura a Cervantes desde los textos de Sannazaro; hay por medio la obra pastoril española que recrea aquélla y los precedentes clásicos comunes. La continuidad regular y armónica de prosa y verso propia de la pastoral italiana no aparece en la *Galatea*, y sí se muestra conforme a la tradición hispánica de Montemayor y los otros. Falta en Cervantes lo sobrenatural mágico; no existe el rumor de vida cósmica, propio de la apreciación del mundo de Sannazaro, ni se percibe en Cervantes la pasión humanística del autor de las *Eclogae piscatoriae*.

⁸ Marcelino Menéndez Pelayo, *Historia de las Ideas Estéticas*, edición de las *Obras Completas*, II (1940), cap. VI; Américo Castro, *El Pensamiento de Cervantes* (Madrid, 1925), pp. 148-155; Eugenio Egea Abelenda, "Sobre la *Galatea* . . ." *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, XXV (1921), 555-559.

⁹ *El Cortesano*. Traducción de Juan Boscán (Madrid, 1942).

¹⁰ Así podría citar: el secreto en amor (*Galatea*, I, 80—*Cortesano*, p. 298). El gusto de la mujer por el elogio (*Galatea*, I, 79—*Cortesano*, p. 298). Teoría del amor desinteresado (*Galatea*, I, 195—*Cortesano*, p. 383). Fines del amor (*Galatea*, I, 195—*Cortesano*, p. 384), etc.

¹¹ Aun sin haber podido consultar el libro de Paolo Savj Lopez, *Il Cervantes arcade* (Napoli, 1906), que supongo vertido en el capítulo, "Cervantes arcade," de su *Cervantes* (Napoli, 1913), traducido al español por Antonio G. Solalinde (Madrid, 1917), indico que Torraca, *Gl'imitatori stranieri di J. Sannazaro* (Roma, 1882), se muestra, según mis referencias, contrario a su importancia; Scherillo, *Arcadia di J. Sannazaro* (Torino, 1888), favorable, y a éste siguen, entre otros, Fitzmaurice-Kelly, traductor al inglés de la *Galatea*, y Mia I. Gerhardt en *La Pastorale* (Assen, 1950), p. 191.

Acaso podría encontrarse cierta relación entre las exequias de Androgeo en la *Arcadia* (Prosa V) y los cantos fúnebres de las Prosas X y XI con el elogio fúnebre de Meliso en la *Galatea*, pero estas semejanzas pueden ser debidas a comunes influjos del Canto V de la *Eneida*. Francisco Yndurain¹² cita un eco de la enumeración de ríos (Prosa XII) en una análoga referencia de ríos españoles e italianos existente en la obra pastoril de Cervantes. El autor español menciona también una relación de contrarios, semejante a la de la Egloga IV, Canto de Elpino, de la *Arcadia*.¹³

Tampoco hay indicios suficientes para afirmar la influencia de la égloga dramática *Aminta* de Torcuato Tasso. Según Sadie Edith Trachman,¹⁴ el tipo de Gelasia, enemiga de amor, pudo proceder del de Silvia. Pero las semejanzas son leves; Silvia acabó por doblegar su rebelde voluntad al pastor Aminta, y de Gelasia no sabemos lo que ocurriría en la terminación de la *Galatea*, pero Marcela en el *Quijote* se mantuvo inflexible en su posición, aun después de la muerte de Grisóstomo. Acaso la onomástica pastoril señalaría vagas coincidencias, lejanos ecos clásicos. Las alabanzas del amor son fundamentalmente distintas. No existe en la *Galatea* la fresca sensualidad del *Aminta* que culmina en la expresión: "S'ei piace, ei lice," ni la alada poesía de algunos de sus buenos versos.

Las novelas italianas

La narración pastoril española presenta como peculiaridad en el conjunto del desarrollo del género pastoril europeo el enlazar los relatos propiamente pastoriles con otros, de carácter novelesco, en un encabalgamiento de argumentos a la manera de la narración bizantina. Este enlace es orgánico y constitucional de la narración, no un elemento accesorio. Como contribución a esta peculiaridad la *Galatea* toma algunos argumentos novelescos de autores italianos.

Por de pronto, aparece la influencia de Boccaccio, el maestro de la novela italiana. El relato novelesco de Timbrio y Silerio plantea el problema del encuentro entre el amor a una mujer y la amistad por el amigo. Este tema pertenece a la influencia de Boccaccio, y corresponde a la novela de Tito y Gisippo.¹⁵ Pero Cervantes no traduce ni sigue fielmente la novela italiana, sino que adapta el tema argumental: en vez de transcurrir la acción en una Grecia y en una Roma que indican la

¹² "Relección de 'La Galatea,'" *Cuadernos de Insula*, I, 105-116.

¹³ II, II.

¹⁴ *Cervantes' Women of Literary Tradition* (New York, 1932), cap. IV, "Pastoral Types."

¹⁵ Louis Sorieri, *Boccaccio's Story of Tito e Gisippo in European Literature* (New York, 1937), p. 249. Véase también D. P. Rotunda, "A Boccaccian Theme in the *Galatea*," *Romanic Review*, XX (1929), 245.

raigambre humanística de Boccaccio, Cervantes hace vivir a Timbrio y Silerio en sus mismos tiempos, y en ciudades de historia española, Jerez y Nápoles, y aun con alusiones a hechos inmediatos, como son los bandidos catalanes y el asalto de los turcos a una aldea costera. El autor español evita la crudeza erótica del italiano, y de manera curiosa encamina a uno de los personajes por las sendas de lo divino, y lo convierte en ermitaño, si bien que transitoriamente. Cervantes cambia la técnica narrativa en tercera persona de Boccaccio por un relato personal de los protagonistas, fragmentado en varias partes que entrevera en el argumento pastoril, y con ello consigue una fuerte tensión emocional al ser el narrador el personaje en el que coinciden con mayor violencia los sentimientos del amor y de la amistad.

Bandello es un escritor que también pudo contribuir con otro argumento novelesco: el del odio entre familias rivales en política mezclado con una historia de amor trágico, según *Romeo y Julieta*. Bien de Bandello o de Luigi da Porto pudo haber recordado la novela que le inspiraría el relato de Lisandro y de Leónida. Las diferencias son, sin embargo, muchas. Por de pronto, Cervantes adopta en este caso un tono ambiguo entre lo novelesco y lo pastoril, contrario al caso indicado por Boccaccio. La tragedia no es doble como en Bandello, pues de los dos enamorados sólo muere ella, y Lisandro queda con el alma en pena vagando por los campos. Esta narración ensangrienta las páginas de la obra pastoril, y el torbellino de las pasiones interrumpe como una audaz novedad la paz secular de los campos pastoriles.

Los poetas

Buchanan¹⁶ creyó notar una reminiscencia de Dante en la *Galatea*, pero esta lejana influencia es más bien un lugar común de la ideología pastoril. En el parlamento de Calíope se refiere Cervantes a la *Divina Comedia* en una alusión, al tiempo que cita a Petrarca y Ariosto, pero ninguna referencia sirve para señalar claros influjos. Petrarca está en la *Galatea*, como en tantos otros autores, irradiando un influjo que Cervantes pudo percibir bien directamente o bien a través del favor de los poetas españoles por el italiano. De Ariosto ha dicho Trachman que Gelasia podía también estar inspirada en la Angélica del *Orlando furioso*, pero, al igual que dije del *Aminta*, el indicio es vago, pues los antecedentes clásicos del tipo de desamorada son varios.

Y mejor que influjo de estos poetas, puede hablarse de un gusto de Cervantes por las formas poéticas que Italia difunde por Europa. Se trata no ya del influjo del endecasílabo y de las estrofas que le son propias, sino de los versos plurimembres y correlativos que Cervantes usó

¹⁶ "Some Italian Reminiscences in Cervantes," *Modern Philology*, V (1907), 177-179.

ya para dirigirse desde Argel al poeta siciliano Antonio Veneziano,¹⁷ y que aparecen en la *Galatea* en los mismos versos iniciales del libro, en tanto que, en contraste, evita el uso del romance tradicional en el mismo.

En suma, la influencia de las letras italianas en la *Galatea* resulta evidente en las partes de exposición doctrinal de las teorías del amor. Las partes novelísticas del relato pastoril presentan influjos de argumentos italianos que Cervantes adaptó mediante una reforma en favor de la psicología de los personajes, aun dentro del torbellino argumental bizantino (caso de Timbrio y Silerio). Abrió paso al elemento trágico-amoroso dentro de lo pastoril (caso de Lisandro y Leónida). Afloja la tensión humanística aun en las mismas traducciones, si bien abundan las alusiones clásicas que sirven para dar tono a la obra. Cervantes manifiesta una clara intención de ennoblecer el romance, según se desprende del prólogo de la *Galatea*, y en este punto puede compararse en cierto modo a la defensa de Bembo, Varchi y otros, del vulgar italiano. Este ennoblecimiento puede apreciarse estilísticamente en la disposición de los elementos expresivos de la oración, en la cual se puede notar en ocasiones la existencia de una sintaxis ciceroniana (como la de Bembo para el italiano), y de un artificio retórico con abundantes antítesis. Apenas hay italianismos en el léxico.

Cervantes sintió, pues, la llamada universal de Italia, y la expresó en este caso de la *Galatea* de una manera moderada en una forma literaria española. La novela pastoril por su carácter abierto permitía estas aportaciones, y a su vez poseía raíces que alcanzaban la literatura italiana.

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¹⁷ Eugenio Mele, "Miguel de Cervantes y Antonio Veneziano," *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos*, XXIX (1913), 82-90. Podría añadirse la mención de una cita en italiano "che per tal variar natura è bella" (II, 110) comentada por Schevill y por A. Morel-Fatio, "La Fortune en Espagne d'un vers italien," *Revista de Filología Española*, III (1916), 63-66.

ZEN AND THE IMAGIST POETS OF JAPAN

FRANK LIVINGSTONE HUNTLEY

MANY of us know that Japanese poems are short and contain images. But why they are so short and what function the images are intended to perform in so small a space are questions usually beyond those who do not have some knowledge of Zen Buddhism. It has often been said that the most Japanese thing about the Japanese is Zen.

More a method than a collection of doctrine, Zen by its very nature does more to a Japanese poem than Christianity does to an American or English poem. Perhaps this can be made clear by turning a lyric of W. H. Davies, presumably a Christian, into an approximate Zen statement. The two "poems" are not equivalent, nor is one to be judged superior to the other; they are different. Davies wrote a poem called "The Example":

Here's an example from
A Butterfly;
That on a rough, hard rock
Happy can lie;
Friendless and all alone
On this unsweetened stone.

Now let my bed be hard,
No care take I;
I'll make my joy like this
Small Butterfly,
Whose happy heart has power
To make a stone a flower.

A Japanese poet would be embarrassed by the lengthy circumlocutions of this poem, beautifully simple though it is to us. Trained by Zen to get at the heart of the matter, he might have written it something like this:

Oh magic power!
The butterfly, poised, can turn
A Stone into a Flower.

These three lines contain the three main ingredients of a Japanese poem by Basho: (1) structural form—a Japanese poem should never be translated into a dribble of prose; (2) an opposition between two poles of a philosophical dilemma; and (3) the seizing of an image, here a butterfly, on which the resolution suddenly turns.

Ancient Japanese poems were two or three hundred lines long (*na-gauta*). In the course of time these "developed" into odes thirty-one syllables in length (*tanka*). And the ideal form, achieved in the seventeenth century, is the *haiku* or ode which consists of only three lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables—in all, seventeen syllables long. Obviously such severe concentration comes about for other reasons than for making pretty images or for being obscure. The well-constructed haiku attempts to express the inexpressible by cutting through to the very heart of a philosophical dilemma. Conceiving a poem-thought as a circle, the Japanese poet starts the reader's train of thought somewhere on that circle by his title. Then the poem becomes merely an arc. Given the arc, the reader can complete its implications, and so reach the initial point.

A poem by Basho (1644-94), Japan's greatest haiku poet, will allow us to see the philosophical possibilities, and limitations, of such a principle. Basho comes across a dead cuckoo and wonders at the distance that separates the heard melodies from those unheard which are sweeter, the real versus the ideal. To resolve this "dilemma" he imagines an island where the cuckoos who are silenced by death sing even more beautifully than they do on this earth. Here is his haiku:

ON FINDING A DEAD CUCKOO IN THE WOODS¹

Oh the joyous woodland cry,
Now that the cuckoos sing.
An Island, one—
Where, on silent wing,
The cuckoos vanish as they die.

The sensational and transcendental oppositions are there, and the central image of Basho's lyric, the "island," becomes the turn on which the oppositions are resolved by a master stroke of imaginative insight.

This poetic method of solving dilemmas comes from Zen Buddhism, a form of Buddhist enlightenment and a way to its attainment. It is a mistake to define Zen, since the moment you do you are in danger of losing it. Life is fluid and its meaning can be found only in brief sudden glimpses—if it can be found at all. Zen does not define life but "gets on" with it. So Japanese artists and poets as they seize the brush "get on" with it, and then stop. Life or ultimate reality has gone on since they began the painting or the poem.

Zen acts on the realization that all life is a profound dilemma.² The One differentiates itself into the Many to achieve self-knowledge; the

¹ Ho-to-to-gi-su (cuckoo)

Ke-shi yu-ku ho-o ya (vanishing go in direction of, oh)

Shi-ma hi-to-tsu (island, one).

² Every Western student of Zen owes a debt of gratitude to the books of my former colleague and neighbor in Kyoto, Professor Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki.

Many suffer because they do not realize they are One. Life is an opposition of one-ness (*Nirvana*) and many-ness (*Samsara*), of noumenon and phenomenon. How does one escape the two extremes and pierce the center of this dilemma? Too often a logical process leads only to one horn or the other. Zen solves the problem by sweeping aside such elaborate intellectual attempts. In doing so, it reduces words to a minimum, because to the degree that words are not reality they stand in the way of reality. Zen believes in saying by not-saying.

The beginner in Zen is trained physically before he is introduced to philosophy, on the theory that physiology represents the simplest form of mind vs. matter. For this reason the ancient Japanese sports, like *jiu-jitsu*, are all based on Zen. In this form of wrestling the main principles are economy of force and "getting on" through surprise. A ninety-pound wrestler can throw a two-hundred-pound opponent, but not by pitting his strength against the mass of his enemy. This would be like attempting to solve the dilemma of life and death by logic. Rather, as your opponent lunges toward you, shift your weight back and, giving his arm a gentle pull with leverage over your shoulder, guide him in the direction *his* inertia, not *your* strength, is already moving him. Similarly, when a Japanese artist, poet, or Zen priest is meditating, he is not daydreaming; he is waiting for his chance. The throw is a matter of a few seconds if he seizes the right time for it.

When the Zen neophyte is well schooled in physiology and can exercise control over muscles of which we are unconscious, then he is subjected to a rigorous training in solving, through intuition, various dilemmas, called *ko-an*, given to him by his abbot.

For example, suppose you keep a favorite goose in a precious glass bottle. Each day you feed your goose until there is danger either of the goose's dying from strangulation or of your bottle's breaking. What will you do? You breathe deeply and sit in a posture calculated to tire you the least so that you can put your whole mind on the problem. Suddenly, in a flash of intuition, you have got your goose out alive (mentally, of course) without breaking the bottle. This enlightenment is *satori* and may take a long time or may come almost immediately. When the neophyte gets it, he screams with delight "*Satorimashita*" which means "Eureka!" If he cheats or gives an answer which does not resolve the dilemma, the abbot will cuff him over the head, crying "*Kwatsu!*" It is a very rough religion.

None of us brought up in Western logic have got the goose out of the bottle, so we might as well proceed to an even more difficult dilemma. The abbot says, "Suppose you are a Zen priest walking over a dangerously high mountain path. Your hands are tied behind you. Suddenly you slip, but you catch hold of an overhanging branch with-

your teeth. A thousand feet below, some picnickers hear the slight scrabble, and looking up, see you dangling there. They yell, 'Hey, you Zen priest, tell us now what is Zen.' What would you answer, my son?"

Sitting relaxed with every pore of his mind open, the neophyte must think without thinking, a process that precedes saying by not-saying. Syllogisms must go. Words must go. To begin with he may try to think of pure numbers, that is, counting without allowing any thought (like sheep) to enter his mind except his counting.

It is little wonder that a lot of physical action must accompany such discipline. The answer can often elude the person who tries too hard, as in wrestling, where the more one pushes the more opposition one invites. This principle of relaxed intuitive discovery is illustrated by the following story.

One day the abbot took his disciples out for a walk. They were jumping, running, wrestling. Occasionally they would practice making haiku on objects suddenly pointed out to them, just to keep their mental responses alert. As they rested in a clearing, the abbot picked up a huge dead branch and, holding it in perfect balance, gave it a few twirls. The abbot, like most Zen priests, had a beautiful physique and perfect muscular control. Suddenly he asked one of the neophytes to name the thing he held in his hand. Caught off balance, the lad stammered, "Why, sir, that—that's a piece of a tree." The abbot brought it down on his head. "Kwatsu!" He twirled it several times again, while the class sat silent and trembling. Then he called on another disciple. Here was a real dilemma. To gain a little time this boy asked the abbot if he might see it. The abbot tossed it over. Catching the branch in one hand, the novice swung it around without losing a motion and brought it down on the abbot's head. There was silence. Then the abbot got up, rubbing his head. "Good," he shouted, "I put you into a dilemma and didn't know how you would get out of it but you did."

Perhaps the lucky neophyte was rewarded that night with three bowls of rice. On the morrow the group was made to contemplate the quality of choices. Of several possible answers some are morally better than others, and the right one is not necessarily the first one. The master on that occasion pointed to a dragonfly on a pepper pod and commanded a pupil to compose a haiku. The lad started out, "Take a dragonfly, pull off his wings, and you get a pep—" "Kwatsu!" The master said that was not haiku. Take a pepper pod, put wings on it, and you get a dragonfly. That's haiku.

The flash of discovery in the haiku of the Basho school usually comes in the final line, which consists of five syllables. Hence a poet

must stretch a single word or phrase into a bridge that leaps across a chasm and allows you to walk from one idea to its very opposite and back again. Kyorai accomplished this in his poem:

ON THE DEATH OF MY YOUNGER SISTER SEN³

Lying in my gentle hand
Your scintillating light,
Oh, Firefly—
Shivers and turns night
And passes to the Darker Land.

In my suggested form for translating haiku I place the turn in the middle. Because we lack the associations of Zen it is useless to make literal translations. If the English poem is to do what the Japanese haiku does, the two poles of the opposition and the resolving image must be clearly stated, and that takes more words. Also, we cannot perceive the poem's architecture unless it has a "certain magnitude."

To take another example, Basho often passed a house that was said to be haunted. It was a bad-luck house. The people in it last had died of tuberculosis; the eldest little son of the preceding tenants had been drowned in the well; before that, there was a double suicide. Nobody had rented it for years. Basho wished he could bridge the past and the present; he wanted to bring forward the tragic stories that must be encased in those shaky walls, to close the gap between the dead and the living. Suddenly he saw (or imagined he saw and heard) a woodpecker, and he seized on it for this poem:

THE HAUNTED HOUSE⁴

Oh empty house with rotting posts
And woodpecker's busy head,
Ta-ta-ta-TA—
The sorrows of the dead
Tapped out in speech of ghosts!

Another of Basho's haiku is very much like Sandburg's famous poem "Grass." He wrote:

THE BATTLEFIELD OF TAKADACHI, WHERE YOSHITSUNE WITH
HIS LOYAL MEN DIED A HEROIC DEATH⁵

In summer fields the grasses grow
Startlingly lush and high,

³ Te no u-e ni (hand's surface on)

Ka-na-shi-ku ki-yu-ru (sadly extinguish)

Ho-ta-ru ka-na (firefly, surprise).

⁴ Ki-tsu tsu-ji no (woodpecker's)

Ha-shi-ra wo ta-ta-ku (post, objective case, tapping)

Ju-u-kyo ka-na (dwelling house, surprise).

⁵ Na-tsu ku-sa ya (summer grasses, oh)

Tsu-wa-mo-no-do-mo-ga (mighty warriors)

Yu-me no a-to (dream's vestige).

So bright—
 Beneath, the warriors darkling lie,
 Their splendid dreams this afterglow.

The metaphysical image, implied in the original, suddenly pulls together the light of life and the darkness of death, time past and time present, the ideal and the real—as the sound of the woodpecker did in the former poem.

But all seventeen-syllable poems are not serious. Some are funny and cynical, like those of Issa. To him life was a meaningless journey from the tub of hot water in which you are washed when you are born to the tub of hot water in which the Buddhist priest immerses you after you die:

Tarai kara
 Tarai ni utsuri
 Chimpunkwan.

In Harold Gould Henderson's nice translation in *The Bamboo Broom* (1934), this becomes:

From washing bowl
 To washing bowl one stumbles.
 God, what rigmarole!

But this kind of thing, though Issa is a great poet in his own right, is not real haiku because it is negative, like pulling wings off a dragonfly. It is epigrammatic cynicism, like Hoffenstein's

Babies haven't any hair;
 Old men's heads are just as bare;
 Between the cradle and the grave
 Lies a haircut and a shave.

One invariably returns to the master Basho to get the true feel, as in the following poem. The turn comes on the sound the cicada makes. Its incessant buzz is a symbol of a brief and empty life, and by implication the poem defines Zen: don't verbalize—

ON THE MUTABILITY OF A CRICKET⁶

Busy cicadas chirp and cry
 On brilliant August days,
 Zzurr, zzurr—
 In this ignorant haze
 They think they'll never die.

Henderson has translated another of Basho's cicada haiku, which can stand literally now that we have some association:

Ah so, and did you yell
 Till you became all voice,
 Cicada shell?

⁶ Ya-ga-te shi-nu (immediately die)
 Ke-shi-ki wa o-mo-e-zu (never think of it)
 Se-mi-no ko-e (cicada's voice).

This *satori* or intuitive discovery of a truth becomes the climax of every *No* play, Japan's classical, transcendental drama. Since, according to Buddhist tradition, the only conflict a *No* play can have is the conflict between ignorance and knowledge, that moment when the antagonist discovers truth is enlightenment. Discovery is all. The change in direction that our dramatic actions take is left to the imagination, on the theory that only a fool, having sought and attained enlightenment, would fail to "reverse" his ways. Words cannot express this *satori*, neither can music. At the climactic moment in the play, the protagonist has his costume changed on the stage and goes into a stately mimic dance. Gazing at this spectacle, the antagonist (and the audience with him) suddenly and passionately *knows* that this old man whom he had taken to be a fisherman is indeed the Buddha incarnate. The intricate unspoken steps of the dance declare it in the least intellectual and most direct way possible; then the play ends. The turn on the image in the haiku is the climactic dance of the *No* play.

In this kind of art there is bound to be some obscurity. Volumes of commentary exist in print to explain Basho's frog poem.⁷ The essentially symbolic tendency of Japanese aesthetic is shown by such a principle as that of *shibumi*, which declares that a thing is beautiful as it suggests more than it shows. By this principle painters of Fuji depict the mountain half-eclipsed by a cloud, which challenges you to imagine the rest. Again, a painter, after meditating on his subject, merely hints in five or six unhesitating strokes the essence of a live carp in the stream; a whole realistic carp would become a dead fish. A perfect example of *shibumi* is a complete poem in only seventeen syllables.

Zen, like so much of Japan's religion and art, was imported from China, where it was largely responsible for the golden age of the latter T'ang, the whole of the Sung and the Yuan dynasties. Zen was introduced to Japan by the Chinese priest Ei-sai in A.D. 1191, when the *samurai* or military class were at the peak of power. Japanese Zen priests and their *samurai* converts used the direct "natural" approach in the only two vocations open to *samurai*—art and warfare, tea ceremony and archery.

That is why Zen has among its strongest adherents representatives of these two apparently antithetical social classes—artists and army officers. *Kamikaze* pilots were Zen. Zen trains men to relax their hold on

⁷ Fu-ru i-ke ya (ancient pond, oh)

Ka-wa-zu to-bi-ko-mu (frog flying-leaps)

Mi-zu no o-to (sound of water).

This is Basho's and possibly Japan's most famous haiku. The commentaries deal at length with the tremendous oppositions between finite and infinite, silence and sound, Buddha's immortal calm and man's mortal life (a splash!), etc. It defies translation, though many attempts have been made.

life, and to take a desperate gamble on the proposition that by losing your life you gain it. It almost proved that one Japanese pilot with a ton of TNT in the nose of his plane can sink an American battleship. The death-flight is surprise, daring, relaxing one's hold on life, and enlisting (rather than opposing) the force of gravity—all in one, with no logic and no words. And when you are caught in a dilemma as desperate as Japan's in July 1945 (perhaps like the Zen priest hanging onto a cliff with his teeth), that is the only solution. "You ask what Zen is? This is my answer. Watch!" Often a final poem was found by our intelligence men in a dead Japanese officer's pockets.

In art, as in warfare, one must have a direct awareness of things as they happen, as of the frog jumping into the pool, instead of merely ideas about things. Hence, Zen's distrust of ratiocination is deliberate intellectual poverty. Material poverty is stressed by every great ethical thinker—those who try to possess things are themselves possessed by their illusions. Zen teaches that it is likewise stupid to think you can hang onto truth. No one can possess truth for more than a second because, as soon as one thinks he has the truth, it has changed and eluded him again.

That is why the Japanese poet thinks three lines of 5, 7, and 5 syllables are just about long enough for any poem. The sudden flashes of insight are described as "turnings over" of the mind. And the *satori* one gets from reading a poem is almost as exciting as that of the poet when he discovered the unfolding of a new world which had been hidden to the dualistic human mind.

It is this turn on an image in the solution of a philosophical dilemma (the essence of haiku) that makes the American imagists, who imitated the Japanese, appear so shallow by comparison. Amy Lowell tried for images and images alone, as did Ezra Pound in

ON THE STATION OF THE METRO

The apparition of these faces in the crowd;
Petals on a wet, black bough.

The image is good, but it is not haiku because "petals" does not emerge from the essential picture and resolve a dilemma; rather, it is a lucky similitude that hangs in space. John Gould Fletcher's dedication of *Japanese Prints* (1918) to his wife:

Granted this dew-drop world be but a dew-drop world,
This granted, yet—

is B. H. Chamberlain's translation from the Japanese poet Buson without quotation marks. Fletcher's own work contains no poem that can compare with his dedication. Archibald MacLeish's symbol in

For all the history of grief,
An empty doorway and a maple leaf

has the authentic concentration of haiku. But Adelaide Crapsey's "Cinquains" are the most Japanese of any American poems. Possibly her most famous poem, "The Warning" (1915), is Japanese because it seems to have been based on Lafcadio Hearn's story of the supernatural white butterfly, "Akiko," in *Kwaidan* (1904), itself an ancient Japanese tale. Nevertheless her poems are close to the Japanese because they are actual forms, not loosely put-together pieces of prose; because the images are philosophically functional; and because, like Emily Dickinson, she wrote in the face of death.

Thus in Japan, largely through Zen thinking, poetry and religion, *jui-jitsu*, tea ceremony, painting, and warfare are strangely one. They all deal with ultimates, and in all of these actions simplicity and directness are the *sine qua non*. Because they use so few words and because they deal always with the essentially few ultimate problems—such as life and death, this world and the next—Japanese poems tend to repeat themselves. There is little development, in the Western sense, of the art forms of Japan.

A final haiku of Basho will illustrate this ultimate character. The haiku happens to use a bridge for *its* bridge. The hanging bridge of vines across the deep gorge half hidden in swirling mists presents a vivid mysterious landscape, but it has a further poetic function:

AN UNUSUALLY STRONG HANGING BRIDGE⁸

Across the gorge extends in space,
One end in mist, this bridge
Of twisted vine—
Fearless, on the ridge
Of time two worlds at last I face.

The bridge, which by its very shape suggests an arc within the arc of the poem, suddenly resolves the dilemma of the visible and the invisible worlds, of this life and the life to come, of time finite and time infinite. For the masters among the Japanese imagist poets, an image must perform this function.

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⁸ Ka-ke ha-shi ya (hanging bridge, oh)
I-no-chi wo ka-ra-mu (life, objective case, entwines)
Tsu-ta-ka-tu-ra (vine).

BOOK REVIEWS

THE SECULAR LYRIC IN MIDDLE ENGLISH. By Arthur K. Moore. Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1951. 255 p.

There has been some doubt whether the Middle English secular lyric of itself provides sufficient material for book-length treatment. This book cannot be said to remove that doubt. The author proposes to deal with the larger issues relating to the origin and development of the secular lyric in England. This he does. But in excluding from his study the religious lyric he is forced, because of limited materials, to resort to overexpansion, repetition, and irrelevancy. However, these basic faults notwithstanding, the book is worthy of attention. In the main, Professor Moore realizes his object of looking with a critical eye at the merits and demerits of secular lyrics.

Chapter I, "Lyric Development," consists chiefly of a preview of the succeeding chapters but does conclude with a discussion of lyric development. There is evidence that a large body of popular secular lyrics existed in pre-Chaucerian times; but these pieces are represented today by only a fraction of their original number, and no definite conclusions concerning their origin and development can be drawn. The surviving fragments, however, provide a basis for conjecture. The evolutionary process through which the lyric went divides itself into three stages of development, represented by embryo, immature, and perfected lyrics. The embryo stage, in which feeling is rather implied than stated, is to be related either to ritual or to personal emotion. North American Indian chants, simple exclamations in rhythm, are illustrative of the embryo stage. The immature level of lyric development is characterized by narration, description, discussion, and occasional rhetorical restatement. The Harleian lyrics, the best exemplars of this stage, probably reflect "very real human relations and represent love as a fairly natural experience, without at the same time sacrificing romantic coloring." The perfected state of the lyric—the "art" lyric—was achieved when the influence of French poetry came to be strongly felt and the words-and-melody relationship was fractured.

Aside from some needless repetition, there are three questionable points in this chapter. (1) It seems hasty to conclude that Chaucer, Gower, and Lydgate were none of them capable of the "full-throated lyric cry." (2) Comparison of thirteenth-century English lyrics—often of intricate form and exquisite expression—with crude and primitive Indian chants is a farfetched and forced analogy. (3) Professor Moore is too insistent that the mediaeval lyric be judged by canons applied to poetry of a later day. To judge a literary work solely by modern standards is to ignore the historical method, the observance of which is necessary for a proper appreciation of Middle English lyrics.

Chapter II, "The Harleian Love Lyrics," is chiefly a discussion of outstanding examples of the native lyric tradition. The Harleian lyrics were probably produced under French influence but embody little of the generalization and artificiality of French and Anglo-Norman models. Furthermore, contrary to the theories of Carleton Brown and Otto Heider, they are (says Moore) generally free of clerical influence. They are characterized by objectivity, sincerity, and

subjects (women) taken from real life. These qualities argue strongly for the comparative independence of the authors from Provençal models. The presence in these poems of numerous formulas and clichés taken from the French does not negate the proposition that the English poets were skillful adapters rather than slavish imitators. The most primitive type of English love lyric is the *reverdie*, which probably owes its origin to pagan May observances. The nature setting is vestigial in the few Middle English *pastourelles* which have survived, but the genuine *pastourelle* is rare for the age. The few extant specimens, actually clumsy beside the better French *pastourelles*, are not representative of the best lyric tradition in England during the thirteenth century. The English *chansons d'amour*, however, carry more conviction and sincerity than their more polished French counterparts.

Professor Moore exhibits a discerning mind as he analyzes the faults and virtues of the Harleian lyrics, and his discussions of individual pieces are among the best parts of his book. There is little to quarrel with in this chapter.

The same may not be said of Chapter III, "Songs of Satire and Protest." Few of these poems, nearly all of which belong to the period from 1250 to 1350, are worthy of more than passing notice. The form fell into disuse, says Professor Moore, because of a weakened creative impulse. The first part of this assumption we may in part accept, but to say that there was a "weakened creative impulse" after 1350 is to deny such writers as Langland, Chaucer, and Gower their proper due. May we not say simply that the lyric genre is not well suited to the purpose of satire and protest? And fear of persecution did not prevent the writing of *Piers Plowman*, *Pierce the Ploughman's Crede*, *Richard the Redeless*, *On the Times*, and other significant examples of mediaeval satire after 1350.

One example will serve to illustrate how Professor Moore sometimes arrives at hasty conclusions. He depicts the *Song of the Husbandman* as being symptomatic of the "rise of a vigorous and intelligent laboring class... sturdy types jealous of their liberties and increasingly aware of their importance to the realm." He states further that the subjectivity, explicit emotion, and "intimate acquaintance with the manor" revealed in the poem are evidence that the author was a peasant farmer. Neither of these points is quite tenable. At the end of the thirteenth century the English peasant was still relatively ignorant and politically irresponsible. Again, it is very doubtful whether the author of this pungent satire was himself a peasant. Professor Moore is by implication denying the power of the true poet to recreate within himself the feelings of his subject—Keat's "negative capability." Probably, as Bøddeker and Owst suggest, the author was of the clergy—a man who, like John Ball, had an intense sympathy for the hard lot of the English peasant.

Toward the end of the chapter Professor Moore makes another of the sweeping generalizations which mar his book. Between *Widsith* and *Piers Plowman*, he says, "lyric poetry is invariably serious, if not religious." He rules out humor and levity, except for noting a tone of whimsicality in the *Man in the Moon* and the *Satire Against the Blacksmiths*. Evidently, Professor Moore does not see the humor in the rollicking *Satire on the People of Kildare*, the mirthful irony of *The Praise of Women*, or the obscene but clever *double-entendre* of the so-called *Balade by Chaucer*.

Chapter IV, "Art Lyric: A Preliminary," opens with the sweeping statement that coeval with the emergence of Chaucer the Middle English lyric lost its inspiration and merit. Scholars have been too "reluctant to accept as [Chaucer's] finest lyrical efforts the mediocrity which the shorter poems all too clearly exhibit." Contrary to the opinions of Ten Brink, Lounsbury, Robinson, and Manly,

Professor Moore says that not many of Chaucer's songs are actually lost. The "lost" songs, he says, are imbedded in the longer works and deserve equal consideration with the separate short pieces. Such lyrical passages are found in the *Parliament of Fowles* (680-92), the *Prologue to the Legend of Good Women* (F. 249-69; G. 203-23), the *Book of the Duchess* (475-86, 1175-80), and *Troilus and Criseyde* (I. 400-20; II. 827-75; III. 1422-42, 1450-63, 1702-08, 1744-71; V. 638-44, 1590-1631). Most of these songs are described as being superior to the separate short poems, and doubt is expressed whether any lost songs would excel those we have. Chaucer, we are reminded, uses the term "song" loosely, and there is no evidence that he wrote songs to be set to music for singing.

This chapter on the art lyric of Chaucer's day contains a definite contribution to Chaucer scholarship in its discussion of the "lost" songs. Even this matter, however, is too much expanded. It may also be that Chaucer students will question Professor Moore's judgment in characterizing the poet's short poems as "mediocre." Formal and imitative though they be, *To Rosemounde*, *Truth*, the *Lewney to Bukton*, and the *Complaint to His Purse* might be considered by some to be among the best of Middle English lyrics.

Chapter V, "The Chaucerian Lyric Mode," launches into a condemnatory survey of the formal and abstract body of lyric verse produced by Chaucer, his contemporaries, and his disciples of the fifteenth century. We may agree with Professor Moore that the spontaneity of the native tradition gave way to the French influence, but it seems too much to brush aside the later tradition as being productive of no good lyric verse. Typical in the chapter are such statements as these: "The lyric impulse in Chaucer and most of his disciples . . . is admittedly weak . . ." "In his short poems Chaucer's genius shines feebly." "The long transition to the Renaissance is in England a sorry spectacle." The picture is indeed dark. In the hands of the professional men of letters—Chaucer, Lydgate, *et al.*—the lyric was written for a small circle of the select, the educated and sophisticated, and became abstract, subtle, moral, anemic, unsensual, colorless. Burdened by rhetorical artifices, inflated diction, allegory, generalities, and abstractions, the form became turgid and discursive. In short, after 1350 the English lyric went to pot!

It would be uncritical to pretend that the greater part of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century English lyrics are of first-rate quality. But Professor Moore's all-embracing condemnatory appraisals are unfortunate. Not a few critics have found praiseworthy qualities in some of the lyrical verse of Hoccleve, Lydgate, and—yes—even Chaucer.

In Chapter VI, "The Debris of the Transition," Professor Moore continues his disparaging appraisal of later mediaeval English lyrics—with perhaps more justification than he had for his views of fourteenth-century verse. The debris of the fifteenth century, he pronounces, "rarely yields a treasure even of minor importance." The chapter deserves praise for its discerning and sanely critical analysis of the few noteworthy pieces (e.g., the *Nolbrowne Mayde* and *Robene and Makyn*) the author finds in the transition period. If there is a weak spot it is the result of his enthusiasm for antifeminism in Middle English literature. In the several pages devoted to this matter there is much that is irrelevant to a discussion of the fifteenth-century lyric.

William Dunbar is the subject of the final chapter. High in his praise of the Scotsman, Professor Moore proclaims him to be "the best lyric poet between Chaucer and Wyatt." In a half dozen of his poems Dunbar advances the technique of lyric art beyond any poem in English since the Anglo-Saxon *Wife's Lament*. He makes the lyric a vehicle for purely individual expression. His verse exhibits

variety of diction and is often strikingly free of both aureate and dialectal terms; and the lyrics "frequently have a wealth of detail and a respectable basis of organization." By turns indignant, sincere, humble, nonsensical and trivial, Dunbar's lyrics exhibit that their author possessed a gift for rhythm, sharp, bold phrasing, wit, and fastidious craftsmanship. He conceived of the lyric as a medium for wholly personal expression of his own experience. "With the sardonic Scot, mediaeval lyric may make an honorable, if not distinguished end." So Professor Moore makes an end to his book. It is his best chapter, one doing full justice to a poet who surely deserves more attention than he has yet received.

On the credit side we may say that Professor Moore's book is an adequate treatment of the secular lyric in Middle English. The coverage is very nearly complete, and most of the poems discussed are analyzed with an appreciative eye. In the sections dealing with the native lyric tradition in England, Professor Moore is usually sound and sure. It is doubtful if we can find anywhere else so comprehensive and exact a survey of this tradition.

On the debit side are matters which, though they by no means outweigh the fine qualities of the book, need to be mentioned. Professor Moore's understandable enthusiasm for the native lyric tradition has caused him to neglect many genuine merits in the "art" lyric. We must not be too ready to condemn a poem merely because it conforms to certain conventions of form, technique, and subject matter. Witness the sonnet. Many mediaeval art lyrics in English are marked by gracefully turned conceits and an imaginative quality which are as worthy of note as the spontaneity and "freshness" of the earlier lyrics. And even in the native pieces we may recognize conventions and formulas. Furthermore, it is too easy to condemn a poet like Lydgate as a "voluminous, prosaic, and drivelling monk" without noting the delightful humor and freshness of the satirical *Horns Away* and *Bycorne and Chychevache*, or the grace and ease of *My Lady Dere* and *A Lover's New Year's Gift*. Reliable critics have also seen merit in such fifteenth-century pieces as *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, the *Cuckoo* and the *Nightingale*, *I Have a Lady*, and the *Flower and the Leaf*. We may agree that the fifteenth century is relatively poor in worth-while literature without acquiescing to the too frequent wholesale condemnation of the period. Miss Hammond's survey furnishes ample proof that the period is not without its bright spots.

Usually Professor Moore's style is clear and unobtrusive. Occasionally, however, he slips (perhaps by design, perhaps not) into the ponderous and pedantic language which is all too frequently used in scholarly works. An example may be found on the first page, where we read this: "By the ethical and critical principles which governed the multiplication of literary works in religious houses, the secular lyric was pre-eminently ineligible for preservation, having for the purpose of the Church no obvious relevance." What Professor Moore means is that the Church copyist did not reproduce secular lyrics because of their profane nature.

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HEINRICH HEINE UND SEINE FRANZÖSISCHEN FREUNDE. By Friedrich Hirth. Mainz: Kupferberg, 1949. 235 p.

In the introduction to his new book on Heine, Friedrich Hirth explains that, until 1933, political duties had prevented him from pursuing his Heine research of earlier years and even forced him to abandon his plans for a fourth and final volume

of his comprehensive edition of the *Briefwechsel Heinrich Heines* (1914-20),¹ for which he had been able to gather valuable material in the course of the years. Even if we do not like to think of history as a mechanism that takes pleasure in "repeating itself," in this case it most obviously was history which, by creating a similar fate for both the poet and his interpreter, at an interval of exactly 100 years, returned an eminent scholar to his original tasks.

Hirth was forced to go to Paris where he could carefully and patiently retrace, over a period of many years, almost every step Heine once had taken in the city of his destiny. This involuntary stay in Paris not only placed him in the most "strategic position" for his research, since after all most of the vital "life lines" in Heine converge upon this city, but it also gave him that close familiarity with literary and cultural life in France, that intimate knowledge of even the less significant French writers of the past and present, without which the whole complex problem of Heine's relationship to his Parisian surroundings could not possibly be grasped.

Thus we seem justified in expecting, as the result of so many factors, a new book on Heine of unusual penetration and significance. It is only a small volume that Hirth has put before us, but one which offers a wealth of information on almost every page. Many of Heine's connections in Paris have been clarified here for the first time, others are shown in a new or at least in a more convincing light. Hirth frequently takes issue with previous workers in the field, and has often been able to disprove their false assertions or careless conclusions; his book, besides being a critical study of Heine, is also a study of Heine's critics. The Heine scholar has been provided with a new tool which will prove to be indispensable for a long time to come.

The book sets out with a detailed account of the circumstances of Heine's "Einzug in Paris." Of primary interest on these first pages are the author's findings regarding Heine's contacts with his relatives in Paris and, more particularly, the results of his investigations into Heine's immediate reasons for going to Paris. Hirth has had to admit that these reasons are still very much in the dark, although on a later page (p. 173) he ventures on what we might agree to be the most plausible explanation: "Infolgedessen hat die Vermutung alle Wahrscheinlichkeit für sich, dass es Thiers gewesen war, der Heine zu der Pariser Reise veranlasste, zweifellos auf Empfehlung Cottas." Heine's relationship to Thiers is the subject of a close analysis in a later chapter; but, since it is impossible to review each of these chapters, we might state right away that one specific aspect of the inter-relationship of these two men is quite insufficiently dealt with, i.e., the grant Heine received from the Thiers government. At least, Hirth's arguments in defense of Heine's acceptance of this grant are highly dangerous. We most certainly agree with him that the chauvinistic accusations that have been leveled against Heine on this score are asinine; but, if we argue that he was perfectly within his rights in accepting such a gift precisely because Cotta also took French money, we are playing into the hands of Heine's worst detractors (among whom, incidentally, in our days Nadler takes a first place). Is it really the same, by all bourgeois and capitalist standards—and any others would be entirely beside the point—whether Heine accepted an annual gift from the French government or whether the millionaire Cotta drew interest on his capital investments in France (he had helped to finance Thiers' paper, the *Constitutionnel*, with a considerable sum)? Unfortunately, this doubtful argument does not gain anything by being repeated several times in the book.

¹ The new edition is currently appearing.

The chapter following the introduction discusses at length Heine's "saint-simonistische Freunde" (Enfantin, Chevalier, Péreire, d'Eichthal) and succeeds in throwing one significant fact clearly into focus—that Heine never really grasped the meaning of the Saint-Simonian doctrine ("Er hatte auch nicht begriffen, dass das Interesse der saint-simonistischen Lehre vor allem auf deren wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen beruhte"—p. 24). Furthermore, the question of Heine's early contacts with the *Globe* (to which apparently he had been introduced by Rahel Varnhagen, although her letter of introduction must be considered lost) is carefully weighed, as is, in the subsequent chapters, that of his association with the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the *Nouvelle Revue Germanique*, and *Europe Littéraire*, in the offices of which Heine first met Victor Hugo.

After these initial sections of the book, which contain the most coherent part of the whole picture of Heine's life in Paris, Hirth takes up, one by one, Heine's meetings with particular persons—Hugo, Balzac, Musset, Sainte-Beuve, Quinet, Vigny, Marmier, Nisard, Gautier, Taillandier, Thiers, and Sand—concluding with a brief summary of Heine's influence on men of letters of the generations after the poet's death ("Die postumen Freunde"). In every instance, special emphasis has been placed on the relative merits of these men and women for the dissemination of Heine's thoughts and works in France. A great many pages, paragraphs, and even single comments could be singled out for their penetrating observations.

But even for a man with Friedrich Hirth's qualifications, the mass of questions to be answered and of puzzles to be solved proves to be too much, and the wealth of material at his disposal turns out to be more of a handicap than an asset. Hirth's book, apart from its value as a source of reference of the first order, is anything but a "good book." In the first place, it is very poorly written, its argumentation is laborious and pedantic, and the organization of the whole is quite inadequate. As a book it is as dead as only paper can be, and shows not a trace of the *esprit* and subtlety that the man about whom it was written possessed to such a high degree. What it so sorely lacks is creative—or re-creative—ability, the power to make the dynamic qualities of its central figure permeate every page of it. We learn a great deal about Heine's way of making friends (and enemies) and influencing people, but in the last analysis all this remains marginal, has little bearing on the man Heine himself. All that Hirth has to give us is a running account of who translated which Heine poem into French first, and whom the poet met where, when, and under what circumstances. Something comparable to Fritz Strich's *Goethe und die Weltliteratur*—even though on a smaller scale—was clearly called for, but all he gives us is the preparatory notes for a book that may eventually be written by somebody else.

It will not take the reader long to detect that this volume quite obviously was not planned as a book in the first place, but rather—if it was planned at all—as a collection of essays and articles about the poet's friends and acquaintances in Paris. The essays that went into it vary greatly in quality. Some of them are quite exhaustive, such as the one on Alfred de Musset or the one on Heine's friends among the Saint-Simonians, while others remain mere sketches, partly because of the limited scope of Hirth's new discoveries, partly because of the secondary role that the men in question played, at least in Heine's life, if not in literature. The number of the individual articles that make up the book was determined exclusively, it seems, by the number of "cases" that the author had been able to "clear," or that he happened to feel like divulging. An almost infinite series of other and similar "cases" might have been added (notably one on Lamartine), some of which are hinted at here and there. It is easy to imagine that many, if not all, were worked

out simultaneously, just as the author was able to complete the necessary preliminary investigations.

In each instance, the history of the encounter is traced from its initial to its final stages. This procedure has the apparent advantage of enabling the author to analyze in detail all the pertinent data in each event without allowing himself to be distracted by its larger frame of reference. Naturally, such a juxtaposition of facts leads to frequent repetitions, almost unavoidable in the case of men like Victor Hugo and Sainte-Beuve, who are so inextricably bound together for the historian by the affair of Hugo's wife with Sainte-Beuve—or, even more obvious, of Alfred de Musset and George Sand.

In closing, one more word about Hirth's use of the method of introducing evidence. His practice of following each French text with a German translation not only expresses his lack of confidence in his readers' ability to read French but also adds greatly to the awkwardness of his writing. Occasionally, however, he has limited himself to the German translation of the original; even if we do not doubt the author's ability to translate correctly, such a procedure must be considered inappropriate.

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JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU UND DIE SCHWEIZ. ZUR GESCHICHTE DES HELVETISMUS.

By Walter Stutzer. Basel: Vineta Verlag, 1950. 107 p.

Most literary critics are agreed that the very things which made Rousseau such an extremely revolutionary figure amidst the *bien-séance* of eighteenth-century France were the traits with which his native country had provided him so amply and distinctly: he was a Swiss among Frenchmen, a Calvinist among Catholics, a republican among monarchists, a plebeian among aristocrats, a romanticist among classicists, a somewhat uncouth child of nature among accomplished courtiers. With G. Vallette (author of *Jean-Jacques Rousseau genevois*, Geneva, 1911), we have always been inclined to associate three of his most significant works, *Le Contrat social*, *Emile*, and *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, with Geneva only or, at most, with the shores of the Lake of Geneva—and they are indeed glorifications of native institutions, religion, and landscape which could never have been written by a Frenchman.

Dr. Stutzer's great merit is to have extended the rather narrow scope of Vallette's book and to have investigated Rousseau's relationship with eighteenth-century Switzerland as a whole. For Rousseau could find in Geneva only the political institutions and the religious background—but not the nearness of the Alps which he eulogized so much, nor the genuine representatives of that type of *homo alpinus* whose virtues he extolled with an exaggeration and an intensity that must prove somewhat embarrassing to most Swiss readers of today. These two elements, mountains and mountaineers, he could have found only in the other parts of Switzerland, in the Jura and the Pre-Alps, in Lausanne, Vevey, Neuchâtel, Yverdon, Fribourg, and Bern, at the time of his sojourn on the Lake of Biel, during the preliminary labors for his planned *Histoire du Valais*—and it is for these two aspects of Switzerland that he felt a permanent *hemvé* (*Heimweh*) during his restless later years in France and England. Nor was this the only contact he had with the rest of Switzerland. He knew the poems of Albrecht von Haller in Tscharnier's translation, he emulated, indeed copied, B. L. von Murali's *Lettre*

sur les voyages in his own *Lettre à d'Alembert*, and was charmed by Gessner's idyls to the point of calling their author "un homme selon mon cœur." He always showed great interest in, and was constantly kept well informed of, the doings and aspirations of the *Helvetische Gesellschaft* in Schinznach and the *Patriotische Gesellschaft* in Bern. By means of letters as well as personal visits he kept in touch with most of the intellectual leaders of Bern, Zürich, Basel, and Lausanne who strove for a rebirth of the primitive and yet sturdy old Swiss Confederation. Like Haller, Gessner, and Muralt, Rousseau was one of the first great glorifiers of the Swiss Alps in European literature—but unlike his German Swiss fellow countrymen and fellow enlighteners he strove to bring about a return to Spartan simplicity, virtue, and patriotism not only in his native Switzerland but in all the rest of decadent Europe.

It is especially in the third part of his dissertation, "Rousseau als Kùnder der Schweiz," that Dr. Stutzer makes clear the international applicability of this Swiss heritage; for both in his *Projet de constitution pour la Corse* and in his *Considérations sur le gouvernement de Pologne* he used an idealized old Switzerland as a model and advocated the establishment of political institutions in keeping with his ardent belief that small agrarian democracies constitute the best of all possible forms of government. Such principles, while possibly suitable to mountainous Corsica, could not easily be applied on the vast and unprotected expanses of Poland; no wonder, therefore, that Rousseau, instead of making the best use of a complicated and adverse situation, would really have preferred to split up Poland into thirty-three small confederated states.

One could wish that Dr. Stutzer had analyzed in far greater detail the *Lettre à d'Alembert sur les spectacles*, in which Rousseau's rustic Swiss idealism, to my way of thinking, reached its absolute peak and in which he drew a sharp line between himself and France. But, even without such added emphasis on the *Lettre à d'Alembert*, Dr. Stutzer has made a new and significant contribution by elaborating at last upon the very real Swiss background of this supposed Frenchman and by showing that, in the great European struggle against the system of Versailles, the French Swiss and the German Swiss, regardless of linguistic differences, fought in the first ranks of a movement which, for one unique moment in history, allotted such a supremely important role to an idealized concept of Helvetia.

W. P. F.

A EPICA PORTUGUESA NO SÉCULO XVI: SUBSIDIOS DOCUMENTARES PARA UMA THEORIA GERAL DA EPOPEIA. By Fidelino de Figueiredo. (*Letras*, No. 6.) São Paulo, 1950. 406 p.

Expliquer le fait central de la littérature portugaise—la création des *Lusiades*—est une tâche honorable, voire inévitable pour tout spécialiste de cette littérature. Le "miracle" de l'épopée qui avait fixé l'attention des premiers théoriciens de la création littéraire avant qu'ils n'eussent été tentés par aucun autre problème, s'impose à nous d'autant plus impérieusement que l'épopée de Camoëns appartient à une époque relativement moderne et éclairée par le rationalisme des humanistes. C'est l'époque où, aux côtés de quelques chefs-d'œuvre, d'innombrables épopées livresques pullulent pour discréditer le "grand genre" par leur sécheresse, par l'ennui et par les longueurs dont ils accablent leurs rares lecteurs. Pour que l'œuvre si fraîche, si vivante, si unique de *Os Lusíadas* ait pu pousser sur ce sol en apparence si aride, il faut supposer le concours de circonstances particulière-

ment favorables, l'existence d'une atmosphère pleine de germes féconds. C'est cette atmosphère que M. Fidelino de Figueiredo soumet à une de ces analyses remarquables par leur précision autant que par l'esprit inventif qui distingue les grands interprètes du phénomène littéraire. Suivant l'introduction qui contient une théorie générale de l'épopée, celle-ci naît d'un état particulier des esprits, d'une "ambiance légendaire" qui entoure, à un moment donné, l'esprit d'une nation pour être "cristallisée" par un grand poète.

Les facteurs constitutifs de cette atmosphère créatrice diffèrent de ceux qui ont collaboré à la création d'une épopée populaire telle que le *Kalevala*. Ils ne manquent pas d'un certain "romantisme" dynamique : l'exaltation héroïque d'un peuple peu nombreux mais ayant l'âme grande, ouverte aux aventures les plus téméraires. Cependant M. de Figueiredo ne se contente pas d'une telle constatation. Il nous propose des dates et des textes ; toutes les vibrations de l'âme portugaise dans ces années d'héroïsme sont fixées par lui sur le feuillet d'un cardiogramme philologique. Il commence par le *De Bello Septensi* de Mathieu de Pise et par les discours des ambassadeurs portugais en quête de subsides moraux et pécuniaires ; puis c'est l'intérêt apporté par les humanistes aux découvertes portugaises, notamment la correspondance d'Angelo Poliziano ; le théâtre primitif réalisant une œuvre utile de propagande ; les oraisons composées pour les navigateurs ; la science qui, inspirée par les découvertes, paie sa dette en attirant l'attention générale sur elles (*l'Esmeraldo de situ orbis*, de Duarte Pacheco Pereira) ; la cosmographie nouvelle ; la grammaire ; la chronique, infectée déjà par le "morbo heroico"... Des œuvres d'art—les tapisseries luso-indiennes et des peintures de Raphaël et de Michel-Ange—apportent, elles aussi, leur contribution. Avant l'épopée de Camoëns, un héros imaginaire naît de l'atmosphère de plus en plus dense : c'est "Lisuarte Pacheco" ; et un roman, la *Chronica do Imperador Clarimundo*, "traduite du hongrois," vient éperonner l'histoire, lui prêter son élan... Tout concourt, enfin, à la naissance de l'épopée par excellence de la Renaissance avide de "découvertes." Elle arrive au dernier moment de l'ascension. Elle est publiée quand les difficultés, hélas !, trop réelles, de l'effort héroïque se font sentir. M. de Figueiredo énumère avec toute l'objectivité du vrai érudit ces difficultés et dévoile, quand il est nécessaire, ce qu'il y a d'anti-héroïque, d'anti-épique dans l'atmosphère qu'il vient d'analyser. Cela redouble encore l'intérêt que l'histoire littéraire et la théorie de la littérature doivent à son effort qui, pour héroïque qu'il soit, n'a pas de "revers."

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VARIA

MOZARABIC POETRY AND CASTILE: A REJOINDER TO MR. LEO SPITZER

AMÉRICO CASTRO

The discovery of Mozarabic lyric poetry (S. M. Stern, *Al-Andalus*, XIII [1948], 299-346) came to my attention, of course, some three years ago. After that I read the studies by Dámaso Alonso and R. Menéndez Pidal on those lovely songs. To me the new texts mean a longed-for and valuable confirmation of what I had written in *España en su historia* concerning the nonlyrical character of Castilian literature prior to the fourteenth century. So important does this discovery seem to me that, in the English edition of my book now being prepared (in large part rewritten, and with great modifications, yet without any alteration in its original premises or structure), I have introduced the Mozarabic lyrics in support of my idea of Castilian life, just as I have used other new facts and points of view to increase the solidity of my description of Spanish life. Numerous reviews as well as the remarks of people who have found my pages and their own awareness and sensibility as Spaniards to be in fundamental harmony have encouraged me in my mode of historical interpretation. I did not write my book as an abstract scholarly exercise but to express how the Spaniards of yesterday and today have felt and feel about themselves. This is a serious problem. It is my problem.

My interpretation of the unique value of the cult of Saint James has been utilized by Menéndez Pidal to explain the assumption of imperial dignity by the kings of León: "Con el hallazgo del sepulcro del apóstol Santiago . . . el pequeño reino asturiano no se sentía en la agobiante inferioridad de antes; ya tenía algo muy grande con que superar la dignidad de la antigua corte visigoda" (*El imperio hispánico*, 1950, p. 22). My idea that *hidalgo*, that most Spanish of terms, is a purely Arabic word, has been accepted by eminent linguists (Menéndez Pidal, Juan Corominas, Amado Alonso, Lévi-Provençal). My supposition that Luis Vives, Mosén Diego de Valera, and the anonymous author of *Lazarillo c. Tormes* were of Judaic origin is now supported by irrefutable evidence. I could fill several pages with a list of all the things in *España en su historia* that have been accepted as "scientific" fact and as a true reflection of the Spaniards' awareness of themselves.

I would feel ridiculous defending myself this way were I not forced to do so by Mr. Spitzer's intemperate attack in the last issue of this journal (IV, 12-13). He calls *España en su historia* "a grandiose phantasmagoria in which the Spanish national character is made to appear as a historically fixed, nay congealed, mass of ways of thinking and reactions, as a kind of *Dauerspanier*." Underlying such imprudence are two things: (1) Mr. Spitzer forgets that the new-found Mozarabic poetry is not written in Castilian, and that therefore its existence cannot be used to prove that there was a lyric poetry in Castile; (2) Mr. Spitzer has not understood what I was trying to say in my book.

Mr. Spitzer says: "Thus Spain was conceived by these scholars [Carolina Michaelis and myself] to be essentially 'the land without lyrics.'" This is misrepresentation. I have never said that Spain had no lyric poetry. Galicia and Cata-

lonia had lyric poetry in the Middle Ages, and Castile had it from the fourteenth century on. It can now be added that Arabic Andalusia had it in the Romance tongue that was spoken there up to the time of the disappearance of the Mozarabes in the twelfth century. Menéndez Pidal writes: "El lenguaje de estos cantarcillos románicos no es castellano" (*Boletín de la Academia Española*, XXXI [1951], 201). This declaration by the undisputed authority on the Spanish language is hardly necessary for those familiar with his monumental *Orígenes del español*. But Mr. Spitzer pays no attention to the fact, and therefore confuses the issue when he writes: "But the *jarchas* are Spanish compositions" (p. 11). Eleventh- and twelfth-century Spain spoke a variety of languages: Galaico-Portuguese, Leonese, Castilian, Aragonese, Catalan, and Mozarabic. Each of these languages existed because the people who spoke them had different and determinate personalities, reflected in the literatures of their respective groups, all of them Hispanic, although all different. The Galicians, for example, had their *cantigas de amigo*, similar to those of the Mozarabes, but there is no Castilian *cancionero* corresponding to the Galaico-Portuguese one. As late as the thirteenth century, when Alphonse the Learned wanted to write his *Cantigas* to the Virgin, he had to turn to the language of Galicia, since that of Castile did not lend itself to the composition of lyric poetry. Thus, Mozarabic poetry, now discovered, remained peripheral with respect to the poetry of Castile. It bore fruit in Galicia and, I think, in Provence, but it left Castile unaffected.

This is not to say that lyric song was totally unknown to the Castilians, even though we lack texts to prove that it existed when the *jarchas* were composed. What is beyond doubt is that, before the Archpriest of Hita and Santob (both profoundly imbued with the spirit of Arabic literature), Castile had no mode of lyric expression comparable to those of Galicia, Catalonia, and Provence. Are we to draw no conclusion at all from the fact that the best efforts to find mediaeval lyric texts in Castilian have produced nothing, whereas similar industry along other lines has produced abundant evidence of other kinds of literature? But I am not going to repeat here what I have said elsewhere about the real differences between Galicians, Castilians, and Catalonians in the Middle Ages and today. Or does Mr. Spitzer think that they are all the same?

To earlier objections by Mr. Spitzer I replied with patience and restraint in *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, III (1949), 149-158; the reader will there see that Mr. Spitzer has misunderstood my thought. I have further developed and, I think, clarified my ideas in a long study, "El enfoque histórico y la no hispanidad de los visigodos," *NRFH*, III (1949), 218-263, which some philosophers and historians have found to be a valid innovation in the method of understanding history. Mr. Spitzer seems unacquainted with this work; he also disregards my *Ensayo de historiología* (New York, 1950).

At the end of his basically comical attack, Mr. Spitzer inquires, with a rhetorical flourish, whether it is he or I "who pays the greater tribute to the eternal genius" of the Spanish people. It is not a question of paying or collecting tribute, but of something simpler. It is a matter of answering the questions how and why a people is what it is, now and in the past, what marks the emergence of a people's identity, and when this takes place.

Last but not least. Mr. Spitzer writes: "the 11th cent. *cancionero* of Ibn Quzman called *The Dove's Neck-Ring*" (p. 6). Ibn-Quzman wrote his well known *Cancionero* in the 12th cent. Ibn-Hazm wrote his equally well-known *The Dove's Neck-Ring* in the 11th cent.

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Announcements

CL is happy to draw the attention of its readers to a new and welcome tool, the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, with annual bibliography, edited by W. P. Friederich and H. Frenz. Vol. I is now in press. It will appear as No. 6 of the University of North Carolina Studies in Comparative Literature.

Etudes Anglaises resumes publication this year, under the editorship of Professor L. Bonnerot, whose address is 129, Avenue de Clarmart, Vanves (Seine), France.

In Professor Spitzer's article in our Winter 1952 issue, p. 12, note 17, line 12 from the bottom, after "Conde Arnaldos" insert a semicolon and the words: "We also know."

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- Harkins, William E. *The Russian Folk Epos in Czech Literature 1800-1900*. New York: King's Crown Press, 1951. x, 282 p.
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